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APPLIED FUNDAMENTALISM:

THE WORLDVIEW OF

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN,

ITS FORM & CONTEXT

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Sean R. Love

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ABSTRACT

APPLIED FUNDAMENTALISM:
THE WORLDVIEW OF WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN,
ITS FORM AND CONTEXT

by Sean R. Love

This thesis seeks to clarify both the form and context of William Jennings Bryan's worldview. Bryan's reaction to Darwinism illuminates a form both cyclical and hierarchial in nature. From applying biblical fundamentals, Bryan believed a positive cycle of reform was possible. Darwinism destroyed this foundation initiating a negative cycle of destruction. Furthermore, the clarified hierarchy provides the context of Bryan's worldview explaining the impact of American history on Bryan and how his value system was constructed from it.

Other issues addressed include hostility and misinterpretation in the exisiting Bryan historiography, and the overlooked connection between Bryan and the little known British sociologist Benjamin Kidd. Also, new questions are generated inviting further inquiry and reflection on a broad range of issues including the relationship between the Second Great Awakening and Transcendentalism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee, Professors Jensen, Cornford, and Underdal, for their assistance in helping me refine this work. Thanks also goes out to all my friends and family for their support and encouragement, especially to my mother for her sympathetic ear, and my father for the clarity necessary to continue forward. Further credit goes to my father (and Ray Ginger) for unwittingly sparking my desire to write on this topic.

But most of all, my deepest gratitude belongs to my wife, Robin, without whom this project would not have been possible. Her support and love are the foundations upon which this thesis rests.

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INTRODUCTION

William Jennings Bryan's last crusade, his opposition to Darwinism, illustrates a distinctive, coherent value system firmly rooted in antebellum America. This system was at heart religious and based on the fundamentals of conservative Protestantism, and this mandated a political application of the values central to it. The consequent "Applied Fundamentalism" is the gateway to understanding Bryan "the Commoner."

To expedite this investigation it is first necessary to review the biographies and commentaries concerning Bryan and then give a detailed analysis of William Jennings Bryan's recorded reaction to Darwinism; finally a careful examination of these reveals a structured, coherent worldview. This analysis begins with a cursory glance at the Commoner's early life to pick out key items as background information germane to the Darwinian issue under review. Moreover, Bryan's personal understanding of science and the effects of education on the development of children are important to the study of the finer points of his opposition to Darwinism. The influence of Benjamin Kidd on Bryan's view of Darwinism, not previously outlined in detail in any major work, will be investigated. Finally, with the form of Bryan's *Weltanschauung* revealed, context will be given to it within the larger currents of American history.

CHAPTER ONE

BRYAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

All major works on Bryan that discuss his value system directly, or those that comment upon his beliefs, academically or artistically, have fallen short of both concisely *and* accurately portraying Bryan's worldview. None of Bryan's critics, friendly or hostile, detail the cyclical nature of his belief system. Few have squarely placed his values and beliefs within the context of his Evangelical, Jacksonian roots or discussed how these ideas were modified to meet certain conditions. One who tries this makes a significant error regarding original sin and its place in Applied Fundamentalism.[1] While blatant misconceptions, like those found in early works, are mostly purged from later works, occasional insinuations and echoes from past disparagement and misunderstandings do trickle into some texts.

Works dealing with Bryan can be divided into four groups in a rough chronological order, though the last two overlap. The first group can be labeled the "tone-setters." Two works, both published in 1929, four years after Bryan's death, inaugurate the Bryan-as-dichotomy interpretation of the Commoner's life and career. Of the two, The Peerless Leader, William Jennings Bryan (1929) by Paxton Hibben is the

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[1]See David D. Anderson, William Jennings Bryan (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981).

most often cited by later scholars. Hibben's remarks set the stage for the most common misconception of Bryan: "In the twinkling of an eye [Bryan] was changed from a moralist seeking change to a moralist defending what was. A radical all his life, William Jennings Bryan was to end his days an ultra-conservative."[2] This assertion is strongly disputed by several later biographers and will be contested in this work as well.[3] Though relatively gracious toward Bryan in the bulk of the book, Hibben derides Bryan's entire anti-evolution campaign.[4] The other book of that year, simply titled Bryan, by M.R. Werner, takes this derision further. Werner makes light of Bryan's religious convictions through most of the biography, but especially in the last chapter covering the evolution issue.[5]

The second group, the "disparagers," represents the nadir of Bryan's reputation. In the 1950s, the play Inherit the Wind and Ray Ginger's Six Days or Forever? both dealt

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[2]Paxton Hibben, The Peerless Leader, William Jennings Bryan (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Incorporated, 1929), 369.

[3]For direct reaction to Hibben's premise see Lawrence W. Levine, Defender of the Faith, William Jennings Bryan: The Last Decade, 1915-1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), vii-viii; Willard H. Smith, The Social and Religious Thought of William Jennings Bryan (Lawrence, Kans.: Coronado Press, 1975), 11, 12.

[4]Hibben was very hostile toward Bryan. He referred to Bryan's reasoning as indulging in "celestial politics," finding it embarrassing. Hibben believed Bryan developed odd "mental habits." See Hibben, 370, 371.

[5]Werner's negative disposition toward Bryan is seen when he calls Bryan's works "dull," "unimaginative," and lacking in "intelligence." See M.R. Werner, Bryan (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1929), 282-86.

with at least some of the issues surrounding the Scopes "Monkey" Trial of 1925.[6] The former, written in 1951, was a parody of the trial, using fictional characters based on the real persons. In this instance, artistic licence, however useful in conveying the writers' outlook (and creating humor), distorted the audience's view of Bryan. Though Inherit the Wind was not meant to be a serious work of history, it still played a significant role in causing the public to perceive Bryan as an unqualified ignoramus.[7]

Ginger's Six Days is a seminal work covering the issues of the trial in impressive detail. But Ginger, like Werner, succumbed to the temptation to add ridicule to analysis.[8] Six Days becomes similar to the earlier, aforementioned works in allowing a strong bias to interfere with understanding. He wrote, "Anybody who has read a few of Bryan's political speeches will not be surprised to learn that he liked huge meals of greasy food . . . his attacks on food showed no moderation and little decency."[9] Here Ginger implied hypocrisy on Bryan's part for supporting (alcohol) temperance, since in Ginger's view

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[6]Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, Inherit the Wind (New York: Random House, 1955); Ray Ginger, Six Days or Forever? Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

[7]Most damaging is the inaccuracy imparted to Bryan's character, Matthew Harrison Brady, regarding the chronological length of Creation. For accounts of damage done by Inherit the Wind to Bryan's reputation, see Paolo Coletta, William Jennings Bryan, III: Political Puritan, 1915-1925 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), 296-97.

[8]After inspecting the sources used by Ginger in Six Days and in a later work, it is clear that Ginger was heavily influenced by Hibben and Werner.

[9]Ginger, 41

Bryan lacked culinary self-control. Later, in reference to Bryan's lack of qualifications as a scientist (and thus his analytic deficiency on the matter of evolution), Ginger wrote that Bryan was, ". . . a man who never in his entire life dissected animal flesh until it was cooked." Such a connection is just one example of Ginger's slant; elsewhere he said Bryan came to his conclusions completely "by ignorance" and that "In theology also, Bryan lived high on the hogma [a sarcastic synthesis of hog and dogma]."[10]

These continual comments are at best inappropriate and wry, if not malevolent. Ginger only grudgingly had anything pleasant to say about the Commoner or his accomplishments.[11] When making a point, he often omited valuable (conflicting) information. This seriously detracts from an otherwise excellent analysis of Bryan and the Scopes trial. In fact, as will be discussed later in more detail, Ginger in Six Days came closer to a concise summation of Bryan's value system than any other author to that date; unfortunately, it is too concise, leaving the need for a fleshing out so as to better understand Bryan. Consequently, as a result of open hostility and lack of respect for the author's main subject, Six Days is of limited value.

Four subsequent works, the "redeemist literature" and the third of the aforementioned groups, correct many of these problems. With these, Bryan becomes

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[10]Ibid..

[11]All quotes in this paragraph, see Ginger, 37-41. For all of Ginger's invocations of Lippmann and Niebuhr and his seeming moral sophistication, he overlooked Twain's maxim about true irreverence being an attack on another's cherished beliefs.

respectable again in the eyes of history. Paolo E. Coletta's three-volume work, William Jennings Bryan, Lawrence W. Levine's Defender of the Faith, William Jennings Bryan: The Last Decade, 1915-1925, Willard H. Smith's The Social and Religious Thought of William Jennings Bryan, and Louis W. Koenig's Bryan, A Political Biography of William Jennings Bryan, are very useful in any study of the Commoner.[12]

Coletta's three detailed books, released from 1964 to 1969 lack any hostile agenda. Indeed, of all the books touching on Bryan, Coletta's are the most friendly to Bryan. Coletta's three-volume set, besides supplying unprecedented detail on Bryan's life, represents the first of two great discontinuities in the literature on Bryan. He was the first to outline why many of Bryan's ideas, values, and achievements were not automatically negative (ie., ignorant, poorly thought-out, impulsive). Almost like a self-esteem counselor worried for his client Coletta stated, "Kudos for William Jennings Bryan has [sic] been minimal." Coletta defended Bryan on a host of points even to the extent of forgiving Bryan for failings he did not have, and therein lies one shortcoming of his books. Coletta implicitly agrees with Hibben and Werner when he writes, "If Bryan was a 'radical' in economic matters and a 'reactionary' in religion, he showed no more inconsistency than many other well-known Americans."[13] Coletta failed to understand

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[12]Paolo E. Coletta, William Jennings Bryan 3 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964-69); Lawrence W. Levine; Willard H. Smith; Louis W. Koenig, Bryan, A Political Biography of William Jennings Bryan (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971).

[13]Coletta, vol. 3, 294.

the holistic nature of Bryan's worldview over time and failed to see that there was actually no inconsistency at all.[14]

Levine created the second discontinuity in the historiographical record, announcing that in Bryan there was no radical/reactionary dichotomy at all. Bryan's worldview was not bifurcated into two, nor did he transmogrify from left-wing Populist to right-wing Fundamentalist. Levine was the first to argue that such an interpretation is an illusion, a misreading of Bryan. In Defender of the Faith in 1965, Levine stated that "both" Bryans (the radical youth and the reactionary old-timer) were the same person with the same value system, that "in all his acts Bryan was attempting to achieve the same ends," and that "there is little difference in essence between the political and religious Bryan."[15] Levine's work comes closest to achieving clarity in the matters discussed earlier and his analysis will be used and built upon later.

It should be noted that nine years after publishing Six Days, shortly after Coletta and Levine began altering the historiographical landscape in relation to Bryan, Ginger edited a collection of speeches and fragments of writings by Bryan called William

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[14]Furthermore, Coletta failed to take his analysis of the roots of Bryan's value system to its logical conclusion and discuss the connection with the Jacksonian period and Bryan's adaptation thereof. Coletta described Bryan as a "romantic idealist" but went no further. See ibid., 288.

[15]Levine does detect at least two areas where there *is* an intriguing argument to be made for paradox in other ways in Bryan's ideas. This will be discussed later. See Levine, 358-65.

Jennings Bryan: Selections.[16] In it several authors offer commentary. One can see a battle engaged between the old guard (Commager, Ginger, even John T. Scopes himself) and the redeemer (Coletta, Levine, Smith) camps. It is an interesting study in historiographic transition. Though still conforming to the overall negative appraisal set by Hibben and Werner, in his commentary Ginger significantly softens his tone, and, though not mentioning Levine, agrees that the dichotomy theory is incorrect. Interestingly, instead of giving Levine credit, Ginger claimed Walter Lippmann first originated the idea four decades earlier. Just as interestingly, a check through the Book Review Index and Book Review Digest turned up no commentary on Ginger's partial change of heart.[17]

Willard H. Smith's book, written in 1975, is also a worthwhile attempt at detailing and understanding Bryan, but especially the former. What Smith offered is not original in terms of new approaches and analyses along the lines of Coletta or Levine, but impressive detail supporting their direction. Though he relied heavily on Levine, Smith delved even deeper into primary material beyond that of Levine or Coletta. Smith's is the

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[16]Ray Ginger, ed., William Jennings Bryan: Selections (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill Company, Inc., 1967).

[17]Ginger, Selections; Barbara Beach, and Gary C. Tarbert, eds., Book Review Index: A Master Cumulation, 1965-1984 (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1985), 1:715, 3:1932; Josephine Samudio, ed., Book Review Digest: 1967 (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1968), 185, 496. Since Selections was edited by Ginger but officially authored by Bryan (the "selections" were of Bryan's writings) both names were examined in the aforementioned indices.

only book on Bryan that even mentions the connection between Bryan and the little-known British sociologist Benjamin Kidd. Kidd had a major influence on Bryan's view of Darwinism and may have even helped spark the Commoner's last crusade. How this was overlooked by all but Smith is surprising. But even Smith only alloted *one small paragraph* to Kidd's influence on Bryan and seemingly miscalculated the timing of Kidd's effect.[18] As will be demonstrated, Kidd's effect on Bryan justifies a more lengthy analysis and will be the focus of an ensuing chapter.

Louis W. Koenig, the last of the four redeemers mentioned here, added further biographical detail, especially, as he noted in the title of his book, *political* detail. Although Koenig was very fair to Bryan, continuing the countertrend begun by Coletta, he mostly stayed out of the fray when it came to evaluating Bryan's ideological position and context, and supplied merely a recitation of Bryan's political life utilizing biographical records and anecdotes. Like Smith, Koenig added constructive information to the new direction set by Coletta and Levine.

The fourth group, the "late-comers," write in light of the new direction and standards set by the redeemers. This seems to be implicitly understood by all except Charles Morrow Wilson. Wilson's The Commoner, William Jennings Bryan, written in

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[18]See Willard H. Smith, 191-92. Smith mistakenly states that Kidd's work, The Science of Power, the one that had the crucial impact on Bryan, was published in 1918, when in fact Bryan had access to it in 1916 when it was truly published. As a result, the attacks on Darwin and Nietzsche being made by Bryan in 1916 were probably as a result of Kidd's work, especially since no-one can account for Bryan's new-found interest in such matters that year.

1970, is disappointingly reminiscent of Hibben, Werner, and Ginger. To him Bryan's arguments concerning Darwinism were "non-sequiturs" caused possibly by "diabetic brain-clouding."[19] Interpretation is suspect from an author who believes his subject was mentally impaired.[20] Interestingly, Wilson wrote The Commoner around the time the four aforementioned revisionist historians were changing the discourse away from the old hostile line, and thus his book stands in stark contrast. Similar to the work of Koenig, Wilson's book is basically a narrative, but, unlike Koenig, does not introduce much that was not already covered and continues in the disparaging, condescending manner of the original tone-setters and Ginger.

Leroy Ashby's William Jennings Bryan, Champion of Democracy, and Donald K. Springen's William Jennings Bryan, Orator of Small-Town America, written in 1987 and 1991 respectively, are acceptable works though they have nothing new to say on Bryan and Darwinism.[21] Ashby's Champion contains well-cloaked echoes from the old school on Bryan. He downplayed Bryan's thoughts and judgment, especially when it came to

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[19]Charles Morrow Wilson, The Commoner, William Jennings Bryan (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1970), 403, 404. Bryan did indeed have diabetes, but no other author mentions it affecting his mental capacities.

[20]Wilson's book is interesting for its anecdotal qualities, such as the report that people claimed Bryan sometimes smelled like lilacs because of his advanced diabetes mellitus. See, Wilson, 414.

[21]Leroy Ashby, William Jennings Bryan, Champion of Democracy (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987); Donald K. Springen, William Jennings Bryan, Orator of Small-Town America (New York: William Morrow, 1991).

crediting the Commoner with original views. Moreover, there are not-so-subtle resonances of the old dichotomy theory rehashed within. Springer's Orator is a pleasant summary of certain aspects of Bryan's life but offers nothing substantive.

Better than these are Kendrick A. Clements' William Jennings Bryan, Missionary Isolationist (1982), David D. Anderson's William Jennings Bryan (1981), and Robert W. Cherny's A Righteous Cause, the Life of William Jennings Bryan (1985).[22] Clements concentrated on one of Bryan's "interim" crusades, the "Missionary Isolationist" crusade the Commoner waged in the 1910s both to keep the U.S. out of world war and proactively appeal for peace in the international arena. Clements, unlike the pre-Levine authors found paradoxes in Bryan's ideas and ideals. Clements argued that Bryan did change in some ways over time and this change bifurcated his worldview chronologically. Clements says, "When [Bryan] entered national politics in the 1890s he shared with his followers a parochial suspicion and fear of the outside world. By the 1920s he knew far more about the world, and he had come to believe that both self-interest and duty required a permanent American commitment to its improvement."[23] Though Clements did not touch upon Darwinism, his point about Bryan's late-in-life view of America's role in the world should be kept in mind. As will be discussed later, Bryan

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[22]Kendrick A. Clements, William Jennings Bryan, Missionary Isolationist (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982); David D. Anderson; Robert W. Cherny, A Righteous Cause, the Life of William Jennings Bryan (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985).

[23]Clements., xiii.

was appalled at what he saw as Darwinism's deleterious effects on America as a global role model.

Cherny's' book is frustrating to read in that he came at least as close as Levine to detailing the Jacksonian connection and Bryan's adaptations, but he also stopped just shy of making certain logical conclusions. Anderson comes closest of all, but he made a major error in stating Bryan did not consider original sin vitally important. Both of these are useful, along with Levine and others, as prototypical contrasts to the study at hand.[23]

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[23]Other notable historians, such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Henry Steele Commager, and Richard Hofstadter, deal with Bryan, but peripherally, not under a focused biographical lense. Their observations will be addressed later.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY LIFE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

William Jennings Bryan was born on the nineteenth day of March, 1860, in Salem, Illinois where he would stay until leaving for college.[1] The Commoner's earliest background betrays his future disposition: ambitious, zealous, religious.[2] He credited three things for shaping him in his youngest days: his father, his mother, and his conversion experience. Bryan repeated several times in his memoirs how devout a Christian his father was, and how he impressed upon young William the importance of the Bible.[3] His father, Judge Silas Bryan, was highly respected in the community of Salem, Illinois, and he was a renowned public speaker. This also impressed young William.[4] Bryan observed his father's short-lived venture into Greenback politics and was strongly influenced by his Jacksonian views.[5] His mother, Mariah Elizabeth Bryan,

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[1]William Jennings Bryan and Mary Baird Bryan, The Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1925), 15.

[2]Bryan stated his desire to be a Baptist minister, a pumpkin farmer, and a circuit court judge, all before the age of six. Ibid., 17, 18.

[3]Ibid., 23, 43.

[4]Ibid., 41-43. Bryan wrote, "The child of a public speaker has the influence of his father's example and the inspiration that comes from an ambition to be like him . . . the object of speaking is to impress truth."

[5]Hibben, 42-43.

had a powerful impact on developing Bryan's Evangelical spirituality.[6] In his home, young Bryan was taught that Christ's message was not just meant for Sunday.[7] She taught William until he was ten, using the Bible, Webster's spelling book, a geography book, and McGuffey readers.[8]

Bryan attributed much of his intellectual and moral foundation to these readers. Many in the twentieth century are completely unaware of the enormous impact this children's literature had on generations of youth.[9] First published in the Jacksonian period, McGuffey readers contained stories that praised the virtues of honesty, thrift, hard work, and fraternal unity. Some stories even contained nascent progressivism, such as "Dignity of Labor" and "The Rich Man's Son."[10] But, as will be demonstrated later,

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[6]Ashby, 3; Hibben, 41.

[7]Willard H. Smith, 18. Silas read from the Book of Proverbs to his son every day at noon. After Silas's death when William was 20, young Bryan read the Proverbs in their entirety once a month for a year. See William Jennings Bryan, In His Image (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1922), 256.

[8]Bryan and Bryan, Memoirs, 40, 41.

[9]"From 1836 until near the close of the century [McGuffey] exerted the greatest influence, culturally, of any person in American history." See Harvey C. Minnich, ed., Old Favorites From the McGuffey Readers (New York: American Book Company, 1936), v. Though unwittingly engaging in hyperbole, Minnich's statement contains some truth.

[10]The scope of these readers ranged from mere pictorial spelling books to collections of rather advanced stories, strict moralistic accounts that read like New Testament parables, though mercifully easier to understand. Precocious by today's standards, they were impressive for the caliber of authors used: Wordsworth, Longfellow, Shakespeare, Dickens, and Hawthorne, among many others.

they also contained messages atypical of the rest of Bryan's formative influences. Bryan said the readers formed "the basis of my education and furnished the themes of my earliest declamations."[11]

Most importantly, at fourteen Bryan attended a Presbyterian revival, experienced a "spiritual awakening," and was converted to that faith; he claimed the incident "had more influence for good in my life than any other experience."[12] This foundation would later keep him spiritually grounded when at college. Bryan thinks it was very open-minded of his parents to allow him to change denominations at such a young age.[13] As a Presbyterian, a nominally Calvinist denomination, Bryan believed in a very liberal view of saintly election.[14] Bryan later in his life said that he never bothered to study the specific differences between Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. Bryan believed that people of any Christian denomination could get to God, including Roman Catholics, a rather progressive belief for someone later labeled as an extreme reactionary

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[11]Bryan and Bryan, Memoirs, 40, 41.

[12]Ibid., 11, 44.

[13]Ibid., 48, 49. Bryan's father was a Baptist, his mother a Methodist, but he had been raised in the former denomination prior to the revival. Bryan did not know until after his father's death that Judge Bryan was silently disappointed that his son did not become a Baptist but instead a Presbyterian.

[14]To explain where he stood, he told a story where the protagonist says, "The Lord is voting for you and the devil against you, and which ever way you vote, that's the way your election goes." Franklin Modisett, ed., Credo of the Commoner, (Los Angeles: Occidental College, 1968), 37, material selected by William Jennings Bryan, Jr.

fundamentalist. All that mattered was that they adhered to the orthodox precepts of Christendom.[15]

When Bryan went to college, he immediately joined Sigma Pi, a society where he received training in writing essays, declamation, and debating. "A prize contest always fired William's ambitions," his wife says of his college days, when, incidentally, she first met him.[16] Both colleges Bryan attended were Congregationalist institutions. The Congregationalists of the late nineteenth century were known to be more socially conscious than most churches; this exposure most likely affected his thinking.[17] Writing in his memoirs concerning this time in his life, he discussed the "transition period" between youth and maturity when "one is apt to become overly self-reliant [and] too quick to be self-assured,"

> It is just at this time when the parental authority is weakening that usually the student begins in the study of the physical sciences. If he is fortunate enough to have teachers who are themselves Christians with a spiritual vision of life, the effect is to

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[15]William Jennings Bryan, Orthodox Christianity Versus Modernism (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1923), 5, 6; George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 134. Bryan explained that getting to heaven was like going to the miller; the miller does not ask what path one used to bring their wheat to the mill, "but simply whether the wheat was good." See Modisett, 37.

[16]William Jennings Bryan, The First Battle: A Story of the Campaign of 1896 (Chicago: W.B. Conkey Company, 1896), 39, includes a biographical sketch by Mrs. Bryan.

[17]Willard H. Smith, 19, 20. In his Memoirs, page 53, Bryan mentions the influence of Congregationalist Dr. Hiram K. Jones on his life and beliefs; he lived with Jones for the six years he attended Congregationalist schools.

> strengthen his faith . . . if he is unfortunate enough to fall under the influence of mind worshipers, he may be led step by step away from faith to unbelief.[18]

Bryan experienced unsettling doubts at some point in college, and his faith was temporarily shaken. But by his own definition, he was "fortunate" that somebody was there to guide him, probably Dr. Hiram Jones. His powerful conversion experience years earlier was also crucial to his not yielding to doubts. This entire affair had a profound effect on young William Jennings Bryan, one that would influence the way he would later react to Darwinism.

Bryan said in his graduating oration that the "formation of character" was most active "in youth and early manhood," underscoring the importance of these years when the educational system has great influence. He said, "The contest between light and darkness, right and wrong, goes on; day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, our characters are being formed."[19]

Bryan remarked as early as 1904 that he was concerned that more and more young people were being exposed to Darwinism in colleges and secondary schools.[20] A decade and a half later he was more distressed. In the words of Mrs. Bryan,

> He believed that all sects should advance their religion by their own efforts . . . unaided by the State. But his soul arose in righteous indignation when he found from the many letters he received from parents all over the country that state schools were being used to undermine the religious faith of their children. He argued that if

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[18]Bryan and Bryan, Memoirs, 51.

[19]Bryan, The First Battle, 44, 45.

[20]Levine, 266.

> the power of the State could not be properly used to advance religion, it followed as a matter of course that the power of the State must not be used to attack religion.[21]

Bryan was especially concerned about children; that is why education became the focus of his drive against Darwinism.[22] Furthermore, from personal experience he saw the profession of teaching as crucial. As mentioned, he himself experienced serious existential apprehension as a young man entering the world, when the Divine was in some doubt. Were it not for his Christian edification and conversion, crucially buttressed by the auspicious guidance of Dr. Jones at just that time, he might have gone astray. It would have been worse still if his timely mentor had been a proponent of Darwinism. It is not surprising that he wrote a teacher is "projecting his influence through future generations . . . no mathematician can calculate the influence which a noble teacher may exert on posterity. And yet, even the teacher may fall from his high estate . . . by substituting the guesses of Darwin for the Word of God."[23] The Commoner included among the nation's "greatest assets" its schools, colleges, and churches, because they

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[21]Bryan and Bryan, Memoirs, 459.

[22]Bryan wrote, "Children are a part of God's plan; they come into the world without their own volition, and every child has as much right to all the advantages which life can give as has your child or mine." He believed that a strong spiritual foundation was at least as important as material advantages. To him, Darwinism threatened this. See, Bryan, Orthodox, 29.

[23]Bryan, Image, 186, 187. In these pages Bryan goes to an extreme that is not consistent with his body of work, "The pupil is apt to be as much influenced by what his teacher *is* as by what the teacher *says* or *does* [emphasis Bryan's]." This contradicts his views on the representative nature of teaching, which will be touched upon later. It is likely that Bryan wrote this sentence in the heat of the moment because the ideas in it are not mentioned anywhere else.

"take in a priceless raw material [young people] and turn out the most valuable finished product."[24] To him, nothing could be more important than what the country was doing to prepare for the future, and the future was the children. If any phenomenon threatened that future, it was the moral obligation of every Christian to do something about it. As the issue of evolution came to occupy more of his attention, he came to see it as "the root cause of . . . dissention in both church and school."[25] Such a seemingly pernicious enemy, perfectly suited for his polarized worldview, fanned the flames of his "righteous indignation" and sent the Commoner on his last crusade. William Jennings Bryan tackled the evolutionists, pointing out the reasons why he was convinced that their theory was so dangerous.

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[24]Ibid., 191.

[25]Bryan, Orthodox, 6.

CHAPTER THREE

DARWIN AND "TRUE" SCIENCE

To Bryan there was a distinction between Darwinism and what he deemed "true" science. All along he made it clear he did not intend to attack science as a whole. He believed science had done much good for mankind, "but the scientist cannot compel acceptance of any argument he advances."[1] To fortify his position, he said, "there is nothing *unreasonable* about Christianity, and nothing *unscientific* about Christianity. No scientific *fact* . . . can disturb [it] . . . [emphasis Bryan's]." It is rather the Darwinian "guessing," passed off as fact by scientists that was unreasonable, unscientific, and "doing the harm."[2] He pointed out that all professions have their good and bad individuals, and the bad do not spoil the whole profession. Just as doctors vary from "the benefactors to the quack" and ministers range from "saintly servants" to the disgraceful, "Likewise there is a difference between science and the scientist." Science is one of the most noble professions, yet scientists range from the "modest Newton" to the wayward "egotist."[3] To clarify further, he boldly stated, "Religion has no quarrel with science,

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[1]William Jennings Bryan, In His Image, 93.

[2]Ibid., 119.

[3]William Jennings Bryan, Orthodox Christianity Versus Modernism, 30, 31. Bryan saw many scientists' eager embrace of evolution as an act of ego. It will be shown how Bryan believed that Darwinian theory evoked selfishness. Moreover, in the late

because real science is 'classified knowledge'. Nothing, therefore, can be scientific that is not true. All truth is from God, whether found in the book of nature or the Book of Books; but guesses are not science; hypotheses are not truths."[4] To shed light on Bryan's emphasis, one author, concerning conservative Protestants, wrote that they "resisted Darwin . . . [but] were not opposed to science as such. Rather, they were judging the standards of the later scientific revolution by the standards of the first -- the revolution of Bacon and Newton. In their opinion science depended on fact and demonstration."[5] For Darwinism such demonstration was impossible. Bryan's emphasis on requiring "proof" and his almost reverent reference to Newton underscore this standard at work in him.

In line with this school of thought, the Commoner emphasized that guessing "is part of [a scientist's] business ... [and] unproven hypotheses may serve as playthings for the imaginative, but they are of no practical value until they are shown to be true."[6] At

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nineteenth century some Protestant scholars, "warned that science bred an arrogance ... that was antithetical to humility" closing one to spiritual truth. Bryan would have partly agreed. Jon H. Roberts, Darwinism and the Divine in America, Protestant Intellectuals and Organic Evolution, 1859-1900 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 22.

[4]Bryan, Orthodox, 32.

[5]Marsden, 214. This argument was common in evangelical thought back to the debut of Darwinism itself. See also William R. Hutchison, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 46.

[6]Bryan, Orthodox, 33-36. He continues, "The whole case in favor of evolution is based on physical resemblances. Those who believe in [evolution] reject the Mosaic account of man's creation by a separate act of the Almighty and give him a jungle ancestry, but they offer only circumstantial evidence. . . ." Also, Bryan quotes Professor Huxley as saying that Darwinian evolution cannot even be accorded the status of theory

times he highlighted what he saw as the absurdity of the entire debate, "Darwinism seems to close the heart to spiritual truth and open the mind to the wildest guesses advanced in the name of science." On occasion he lapsed into a mocking tone.[7] Many Protestants as early as the 1870s argued that belief in Darwinism required a leap of faith even greater than theirs.[8]

Bryan attacked the notion that an invisible, evolutionary force existed, performing via acts of chance. If there was a "pushing force . . . that tends to lift all matter from lower to higher forms, chemistry would find it."[9] Therefore, "there is no natural law that insures an improved physical development. What civilized race is a physical improvement on the savage?"; prominent evolutionists even deny "that the average man

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until the method of natural selection can be proven; to Bryan this is more than enough to quash any talk of evolutionary "fact." See Image, 94, 95.

[7]Ibid. See Bryan, Seven Questions in Dispute (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1923), "If [a species] has eyes, so the biologists assure us, it is because light waves played upon the skin and eyes came out in answer; if he has ears, it is because the air waves were there first. . . ." He wonders aloud how men can accept these things but scoff at God being able to save Jonah with a fish. See also Image, 99.

[8]Roberts, 77. Furthermore, one such thinker protested, "And how much more authority has science to declare the whole field of knowledge is circumscribed by its limits?" Bryan shared this feeling.

[9]He demanded to know how chance brought hydrogen and oxygen into existence. Or how, "by chance," they together formed water. Bryan argued that, if anything, chemistry teaches that disintegration, known as entropy, is the rule of nature. His critics "ignore" these "facts." He concludes there must be a "permanent relationship between various forms of matter." Bryan, Orthodox, 38-40, for quotes in footnote. See also Image, 18, 19, and Seven Questions, 138, 139.

of to-day [sic] surpasses the ancients in intellectual capacity."[10]

Bryan made much of the fact that Darwin's two books, The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man, "are full of words indicating uncertainty. The phrase 'we may well suppose' occurs over eight hundred times [between the two works] . . . the eminent scientist is guessing."[11] To underscore this point he quotes Darwin directly, discussing missing links on page 162 of The Descent of Man , ". . . not-withstanding the fact that connecting links have not hitherto been discovered."[12] Throughout his writings, the Commoner emphasized this point: "The thing about circumstantial evidence is that one fact will overthrow any amount of it," and the fact remains that "No species has ever been traced to another." So Bryan said that to consider evolution a fact and treat it as such is completely illegitimate.[13]

In reference to Bryan's reasonings on this matter, an eminent scientist named Henry Fairfield Osborn responded in a book called The Earth Speaks to Bryan. Osborn wrote the book as if specifically replying to the Commoner (though publishing it for the

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[10]Bryan, Seven Questions, 136.

[11]Bryan, Image, 90, 91; Seven Questions, 133. Bryan also noted how often Darwin used words such as "apparently" and "probably."

[12]Bryan, Image, 91.

[13]He still would not concede if the link were found: "Even if the 'missing links' could be found, it would be as reasonable -- though not so flattering to man's pride -- to believe that the monkey is a degenerate man as that man is an improved monkey." Ibid., 66, for quotes both in the text and footnote.

public).[14] Osborn said that by 1925 so much evidence had been discovered that clear paths to many species, including to the horse and man, have been clearly made. He boldly asserted that this is so obvious that evolution is tacitly considered on par with gravity.[15] Bryan responded in a newspaper article entitled, "Mr. Bryan Speaks to Darwin," published the month of his death. Bryan considered Osborn's assertion about evolution and gravity so ludicrous, he questioned whether the scientist was debating in "good faith."[16] The two had irreconcilable differences based on two different criteria of what acceptable science was.

Bryan believed the issues the Darwinists thought they knew were actually mysteries that they did not know. Bryan used the logic of the apostle Paul that things seen are temporal, things unseen eternal. He believed it was highly presumptuous of any scientists, who deal with the temporal, to feel that they are superior to the eternal.[17] Furthermore, for these persons to use a "guess" to question what he held most dear was unacceptable, "It is no light matter to impeach the veracity of the Scriptures in order to

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[14]See, Henry Fairfield Osborn, The Earth Speaks to Bryan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925).

[15]Ibid., 28-31. Many scientists in the 1990s disagree with Osborn, though they are a minority. Even those disposed to evolution today have many problems with the theory. See Francis Hitching, The Neck of the Giraffe: Where Darwin Went Wrong (New Haven, Conn.: Ticknor and Fields, 1982).

[16]William Jennings Bryan, "Mr. Bryan Speaks to Darwin," The Forum 74, (July 1925): 102.

[17]Bryan, Image, 93, 94.

accept, not a truth . . . but a mere hypothesis."[18] Although he believed students should learn about science, it was essential that they learn the "science of how to live." This is because, to Bryan, knowing about the "Rock of Ages" was more important than knowing the "age of rocks."[19] But this religious knowledge was endangered by the teachings of Darwin; these teachings eliminated "every vital part of the Bible because [they were] inconsistent with the hypothesis . . ." of Darwin.[20] These "vital parts" were to Bryan the "Fundamentals."

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[18]Ibid., 94, 95.

[19]Bryan, Orthodox, 32.

[20]"Mr. Bryan Speaks to Darwin," The Forum 74 (July 1925): 107.

CHAPTER FOUR

DARWIN EXPOSES THE INGREDIENTS OF APPLIED FUNDAMENTALISM

Bryan feared Darwinism would extinguish the "vitality" of the Bible. This primary fear and his reactions reveal the basic ingredients of Bryan's worldview. It begins with the fundamentals. In 1910 the Presbyterian church agreed upon five basic "Fundamentals" in response to the growth of modernist thought: one, the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible through men; two, Christ was born of a virgin; three, Christ was a sacrifice to reconcile humanity to God; four, Christ rose from the dead; and five, Jesus had supernatural powers on Earth, that is, he performed miracles.[1] Bryan believed that Darwinism put each one of these five fundamentals under attack.[2]

Modernist critics argued that science invalidated at least parts of the Bible, a challenge to the first fundamental. Bryan angrily asked by what authority was the Bible considered fallible, and what standard could replace it? Since no two critics could agree

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[1]Bryan, "The Fundamentals," The Forum 70 (July 1923): 1665, 1666; Orthodox, 7; Marsden, 117. The "Fundamentals" were also a collection of essays written between 1910 and 1915 by conservative Protestant authors, see Hutchison, 196-202; Marsden, 118-23. The name of these declarations obviously lent itself to the term "Fundamentalist."

[2]"I venture to assert that the unproven hypothesis of evolution is the root cause of nearly all the dissension in the church over the five points in discussion." Bryan, Orthodox, 21.

on what parts of the Bible were authentic versus mythical, each "transfers the presumption of infallibility from the Bible to himself."[3]

Bryan was very concerned about the corrosive effects of Darwinism on belief in the other four fundamentals. Regarding the virgin birth, Bryan contended that God can create life any way he sees fit. If Christ came to save all of humanity, it was not unreasonable to have him arrive in a special way. To say otherwise literally made Jesus a bastard and a fraud.[4] Of those who likewise opposed the notion of Christ's act of atonement in humanity's stead Bryan said, "they deny man ever fell [from grace] . . . they contend that man has been rising from the beginning," alluding to the evolutionists. He found this distressing because rejection of Christ's atonement "eliminates the element that has made Christianity a missionary force."[5] Denial of the fourth fundamental point, Christ's resurrection, completes Christ's degradation.[6] Furthermore, to say categorically that miracles did not occur exposed, to him, the narrow-mindedness of his critics: "The trouble with those who reject the miracles is that they have adopted a hypothesis that

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[3]Ibid., 10.

[4]Ibid., 12.

[5]Ibid., 17. He went on, "Why come across stormy oceans and endure continuing sacrifices upon the frontiers of the world if mankind does not need a savior and Christ was but an ordinary human being?"

[6]Ibid., 19. For him this was an acute tragedy because he saw Christianity as the foundation for all reform and moral uplift. This is germane to issues discussed later.

precludes the miraculous. It is not, therefore, a question of proof with them, but what they regard as a matter of principle."[7]

William Jennings Bryan considered Darwinism a destroyer of faith. His "*principal objection* [emphasis added] to evolution is that it is highly harmful to those who accept it . . . ." Elsewhere he stated, ". . . the Darwinian doctrine had been the means of shaking the faith of millions."[8] The hypothesis that makes humanity "cousin to brute and bird" caused demoralization.[9] To Bryan, loss of faith was disastrous because "without faith it is not only impossible to please God, but it is impossible to accomplish *anything of importance* [emphasis added]."[10]

Bryan used Charles Darwin himself as a primary example of the effects of Darwinism. Quoting from Darwin's Life and Letters, he told of how the young scientist was an " 'orthodox' . . . 'devout' . . . [and] 'enthusiastic Christian'" when traveling on the

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[7]Bryan, Famous Figures of the Old Testament (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1986), 134. Furthermore, to Bryan, in a worldview where miracles are precluded, the Bible becomes a mere "scrap of paper." See Orthodox, 20.

[8]Bryan, Image, 87; Seven Questions, 144. Bryan argued in Image that it is the moral obligation of Christians to combat any force that ravages the foundation of their faith because such a force "is a menace to fundamental morality."

[9]Bryan, Orthodox, 23.

[10]William Jennings Bryan, in a speech given at the unveiling of a monument dedicated to James Lewen of Illinois, 17 November 1909, Bryan Papers, Special Collections, Mary Norton Clapp Library, Occidental College, Los Angeles.

Beagle; but later, Darwin denied the existence of "revelation."[11] If a man as devout as Darwin could have his faith erased, the Commoner mused, what then is Darwinism "likely to do for immature students who are throwing off parental authority and who gladly accept any hypothesis that will justify them in throwing off the authority of God also?"[12]

Bryan took a special interest in young people regarding this matter. He notes how records show that most of Darwin's students rejected Christ.[13] Going further, he quotes from a study by psychology professor James H. Leuba of Bryn Mawr College that concluded that the experiences of Darwin and his students (in regards to their loss of the Christian faith) were not exceptional, but rather a natural consequence of Darwinian ideas.[14] Leuba concluded that over half of the professors he surveyed did not believe "in a personal God." Among students he found that whereas only fifteen percent of the freshmen surveyed had "rejected" Christianity, forty percent of those who had graduated

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[11]Bryan, Image, 114-16; Orthodox, 21, 22; Seven Questions, 144-46. Bryan's interpretation of this loss of faith was because, "in order to hold to his hypothesis [Darwin] found it necessary to discard every vital truth of [Christianity]."

[12]Bryan, Orthodox, 22. In an article, Bryan says that "rejecting the authority of God [is] an excuse that appeals to [a student] more strongly at this age...." See William Jennings Bryan, "God and Evolution," New York Times, 26 February 1922, sec. 7, p. 1.

[13]Bryan, Orthodox, 40, 41.

[14]Ibid., 22-23. Leuba submitted questions to leading professors and scientists across the country, chosen from a book containing 5,500 such persons. He did the same with thousands of students from nine major universities.

had done so.[15] Bryan exclaimed that Christians should be alarmed.[16] Bryan believed that Darwinism was a frontal assault on the foundational beliefs of Christianity, causing a decline of faith among Christians, most importantly *young* Christians. Most devastating and dangerous for humanity, however, was the specific loss of faith in the Bible, the very basis of Christianity.

Bryan discussed the importance of the Bible in his writings. "The Bible has done more to determine the civilization of today than all other books combined," he claimed.[17] Without its divine authorization, Bryan warned of moral anarchy.

> As there can be no civilization without morals, and as morals rest upon religion, and religion upon God, *the question [of] whether the Bible is true or false is the supreme issue* [emphasis added] among men. As the Bible is the only book known to the Christian world whose authority depends upon inspiration, the degradation of the Bible leaves the Christian world without a standard of morals other than that upon which men can agree. As mens' [sic] reasons do not lead them to the same conclusion, and as greed and self-interest often overthrow reason, *the fixing of any moral standard by agreement is impossible* [emphasis added]. If the Bible is overthrown, Christ ceases to be a Divine Character and His words, instead

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[15]Bryan, Image, 117; Orthodox, 22, 23; Seven Questions, 147. It was unclear what standard was applied for a confirmed "rejection" of the Christian faith.

[16]Interestingly, Ray Ginger, though mentioning the Leuba study, had no response to it. Since this was such an important part of Bryan's concerns, it is odd that Ginger did not at least make light of it. It is possible that he found it too absurd even to comment on. See Ginger, 30, 31.

[17]Bryan, Famous Figures, 177. He also contrasted the Bible with Darwinism; the latter deals with just life on Earth, but the former reveals the source of life, tells of the hereafter, and deals with the whole universe. See Image, 132.

> of being binding upon the conscience, can be followed and discarded according as the individual's convenience may dictate.[18]

Bryan's ideas in this passage may have been influenced by Tolstoy.[19] Both men agreed upon the inherent sinfulness of man as well as the relevance and necessity of religion, even in the modern world.[20] Indeed, the Commoner stated that the world needed the Bible more than ever.

Seeing that so much was riding on the Bible in his view, he suggested that people demand proof before discounting the "Book of Books."[21] But he did not think this was any threat if the facts were presented truthfully. He conceded that the Bible must conform to "the results of modern, scientific research," but, as it has been shown, he believed in an older, Newtonian standard of scientific evidence. Proof beyond science was also acceptable to him, in a fashion. The "fact" that, in his opinion, no book had

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[18]Bryan, Seven Questions, 15. On the first page of this book, there is a drawing illustrating the "Descent of the Modernists" in steps. The steps read like a slippery slope, demonstrating that the Bible is the linchpin tying the rest together: "Christianity/ Bible not infallible/ Man not made in God's image/ No miracles/ No virgin birth/ no Deity [ie., Christ not divine]/ No atonement/ No resurrection/ Agnosticism/ Atheism."

[19]Bryan, Image, 11, 12. Bryan quotes Tolstoy, "Morality is but the outward manifestation of religion."

[20]Ibid. Bryan discussed how Tolstoy severely rebuked what he called the "cultured crowd" who saw religion good enough for the ignorant masses but below their intellectual level. The Russian's reply: Religion is not superstition and does not rest upon fear of unseen forces, but upon "man's consciousness of his finiteness amid an infinite universe and of his sinfulness. This consciousness . . . man can never outgrow."

[21]Bryan, Famous Figures, 177, 185, 186.

ever been written coming close to the perfection of the Bible, even with the "wisest men . . . [and] great universities" of his day, was proof enough.[22]

Bryan also referred to the importance of the "heart." This idea was crucial to him as well; religion must be based on the heart, it cannot be based on intellect alone. According to Bryan,"We have overestimated, I think, the relative importance of the mind, and underestimated the relative importance of the heart in the shaping of human happiness." [23] As he put it elsewhere, "The mind is a mental machine and needs a heart to direct it. If the heart goes wrong, the mind goes with it. The mind plans as willingly for the commission of crime as for the benefit of society."[24] Bryan also said, "A heart can be changed in a moment and, therefore, a nation can be born [reborn?] in a day."[25] All the more reason to concentrate on people's hearts. But only religion could "take hold upon the human heart."[26] The only force in religion able to do this for Bryan was God.

Bryan believed that the potential for the heart, properly channeled by divine grace, was even greater than that of the mind:

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[22]Bryan, Orthodox, 9. This concept was all the more amazing to him when he considered that the Bible was written by mostly "unlettered men of old scattered across many centuries ... of a single race and living in a limited area, without the advantages of swift ships and telegraph wires."

[23]William Jennings Bryan, Under Other Flags (Lincoln, Nebr.: Woodruff-Collins Printing Company, 1904), 260.

[24]Ibid., 14, 29, 30.

[25]Willard H. Smith, 30, 31.

[26]Bryan, Image, 154.

> We talk of inventions of genius, and they have indeed been great. We are amazed to think that a man can stand by the side of the telegraph instrument and by means of the electric current talk with people ten thousand miles away, but if that achievement is wonderful, the achievements of the heart are still more wonderful. The heart that is full of love for its fellows, the heart that yearns to do some great good, the heart that puts into operation some movement for the uplifting of the human race, that heart will speak to hearts that will beat ten thousand years after all our hearts are still. That is more wonderful than talking to people ten thousand miles away.[27]

Belief in God was another cornerstone of the Commoner's philosophy. Sincerity and intimacy of prayer required a belief in God, as did a belief in immortality, a spirit of brotherhood from a "Common Parent," belief in the Bible (to Bryan, belief in God and the Bible were mutually necessary), and a belief in Christ.[28]

But the *most* crucial reason for the need for God was a sense of responsibility, "One is appalled at the thought of what social conditions would be like if reverence for God were erased from every heart . . . A sense of responsibility to God for every thought and word and deed is the most potent influence that acts upon life."[29] Sounding similar to the thoughts of the well known late twentieth century psychologist/author M. Scott Peck, Bryan added, "There is a powerful restraining influence in the belief that an all-seeing eye scrutinizes every thought and word and act."[30] This God must not only be all-

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[27]Bryan, Under Other Flags, 260-61.

[28]Ibid., 86, 87. Also see Famous Figures, 169.

[29]Ibid., 26-29. "Belief in God is the basis of every moral code."

[30]William Jennings Bryan, "The Prince of Peace," in William Jennings Bryan: Selections, ed. Ray Ginger (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 138: M.

seeing but must be personal to be effective.[31] Bryan said that, "Without a sense of responsibility to God, there is nothing for man to build upon."[32] The Golden Rule must be built on top divine edifice to work at all. An individual must love God first, then one can love a neighbor.

Bryan often referred to his model of reform as "Applied Christianity." In a speech of that name he gave in 1919 he said, "Love of neighbor . . . is not only a proof, but the only proof that man can furnish to those about him, of his love of God."[33] Bryan believed the Golden Rule's preceding commandment was, at heart, one with it.[34] To keep true to the commandments of Jesus, Bryan believed Christians, both clergy and lay people, "singly and collectively . . . had to involve themselves . . . in efforts to correct social injustice."[35] Bryan noted that "Christian men *must* take an interest in politics

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Scott Peck, M.D. discusses the concept of an "Ideal Observer"/"Higher Power" in much the same way as Bryan discusses God here. See M. Scott Peck, A World Waiting to be Born, Civility Rediscovered (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), 43-54.

[31]Bryan, Image, 27.

[32]William Jennings Bryan, in speech at the unveiling of James Lewen's monument, Bryan Papers.

[33]Willard H. Smith, 28.

[34]"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandments greater than these." Mark 12:30-31

[35]Willard H. Smith, 27, 167.

[emphasis Bryan's]." Bryan saw democracy as a sort of religion, and like any good religion it should be based on the Golden Rule.[36]

Though the "Fundamentals" were the pillars of his philosophy, love was the centerpiece: "Love makes money-grabbing seem contemptible; love makes class prejudice impossible; love makes selfish ambition a thing to be despised; love converts enemies into friends."[37] Yet Bryan warned all of this was imperiled by Darwin's legacy, "A sense of responsibility, when strained through the blood of fish, reptile, bird, and beast loses its power to bind that which we know as conscience."[38] Likewise, love would be lost.

Bryan repeatedly pointed out that any compromise with Darwinism endangered these essential qualities, chastising those "theistic evolutionists" who tried to find common ground between the theory of evolution and Christianity. He included these people with the "liberals" and "modernists" who were undermining all that was important in his eyes.[39] The theistic evolutionists mistakenly believed that evolution is not inconsistent with Christianity; for this reason, he said, "I do not distinguish between

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[36]Ibid., 19, 32.

[37] Ibid., 235. In the words of Levine, "There was always a pragmatic tone to Bryan's objection to Darwin's teachings. Bryan was arguing not only for the fact of God but for the need of God." See Levine, 269.

[38]Ibid., 112; Orthodox, 23-25; Seven Questions, 128.

[39]Bryan, Orthodox, 5, 21.

Theistic and Atheistic evolutionists . . . [because] the former are the atheists in the making and are doing more harm than atheists because they mislead more."[40]

Henry Fairfield Osborn, the scientist, argued against these notions. He said Bryan was right when he declared that the Bible nowhere supports evolution, but wrong when he states that "evolution ends in atheism."[41] In fact, Bryan was up against more than just scientists and professors, but also a decades-old school of thought in Protestant theology. In the late nineteenth century, when a majority of the Christian laity in America still at least nominally believed in the infallibility of Scripture, a growing number of Protestant theologians denied that an orthodox interpretation of the Bible was necessary. This faction, which included Henry Ward Beecher and Lyman Abbot, was convinced that evolution could be seen as "God's way of doing things."[42] Bryan, in both direct and indirect replies to these positions in newspapers, and in his several books, reasoned again and again that such compromises were self-defeating for Christians.

Bryan conceded that at first glance one could see how God was able to make humans through evolution *or* through special creation; God is God and can do things any

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[40]Bryan, "Mr. Bryan Speaks to Darwin," 101-7.

[41]Osborn, 25, 26. Osborn notes that even St. Augustine was open to the possibility that God used a series of natural developments to produce man and nature. His assertion that Augustine was a theistic evolutionist ahead of his time is interesting. Bryan never reacted to this idea.

[42]Roberts, 144, 196, 197, 222. See also Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1944), 29, 30.

way He sees fit.[43] The problem with accepting the former method was that it made the Creator an impersonal spectator in his own creation. He notes how in their view electrons came out of "stuff" forming atoms, forming matter, matter then formed life, life formed the mind, and mind formed spirit. This evolution to the spiritual seemed dependent on the material, corporal, and temporal, making spirituality seem contrived and thus appropriately accessible to alteration; this position obviously lends itself to not accepting the all-important Fundamentals.[44] This God, he said, "instead of being a personal God, is so far away that man can have no consciousness of His presence in daily life, so far away that He cannot hear or answer prayer, He is little . . . better than the No-God of the materialists." Thus "the [morally] restraining influence, [the one] more potent than any external force, is paralyzed when God is put so far away."[45] The moral chaos he so feared would become a reality if the theistic evolutionists' position won out. In an appeal to the Christian heart, Bryan said, ". . . why should we want to imprison God in an

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[43]Bryan, Image, 110, 111.

[44]He claimed that since theistic evolutionists negated God's ability to participate actively in man's affairs, due to the fact that he is now letting evolutionary forces work for Him, incidences such as Jonah and the fish could not have occurred. But Jesus predicated his divinity on being in the tomb for three days, as Jonah had been in the fish (in Matthew 12:39, 40). Such a conclusion makes Christ a liar and Christianity a giant deception. See Bryan Famous Figures, 135.

[45]Ibid., 112; Famous Figures, 186-188; Orthodox, 23-25; Seven Questions, 128. Bryan warned that "there is no place in evolution for the cry of the penitent soul."

impenetrable past? This is a living world, why not a living God upon the throne? Why not allow Him to work now?"[46]

Bryan prophesied that with the loss of the only true spiritual standard, humanity would morally weaken, false gods would come to fill the spiritual void, and, ultimately, mankind would fall prey to a callousness of spirit, devoid of love. Bryan wrote, "Materialists have attempted to build up a system of morality upon the basis of enlightened self-interest." The ideals of this philosophy were stolen from religion, yet it takes away the support and substance of these ideals.[47] Worse, such a philosophy poisons the young. If school children are taught that they are just animals, at what point will "the killing of a relative [cease] to be murder and the eating of one's kin [cease] to be cannibalism?" Bryan asked dramatically.[48]

The attempt of the "materialists" to construct a new moral code strictly from reason was, to the Commoner, an extraordinary act of arrogance. Once again referring to Tolstoy, he called such misplaced faith in reason, "mind worship," considering it "the great sin of the intellectual world today."[49] It was a form of idolatry, but not the only

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[46]Bryan, "God and Evolution," sec. 7, p. 1.

[47]Ginger, Selections, 137. This is from Bryan's "Prince of Peace" speech.

[48]Bryan and Bryan, Memoirs, 535. Quote taken from Bryan's "Last Speech." He wrote this speech as the closing argument for the Scope's trial but was never able to deliver it publicly. It was published posthumously by his wife.

[49]Bryan, Orthodox, 41, 42.

one.[50] He singled out the false gods of ease and of chance. The followers of chance wanted something for nothing, and "evolution excuses the sensualist and encourages the worshiper of the god of ease." He looked to the words of the apostle Paul, "what advantage to me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."[51]

But in contrast, "Christianity is not a lazy man's job. It presents the highest ideals known." The "true" religion was best suited for man: "Christ gave the world a philosophy that fits into every human need. . . . No false gods, not even *self -- the most popular of all false gods* [emphasis added] -- must be permitted to come between man and his Maker."[52]

"Evolution," he said, "is the doctrine of the fatalist." If man inherited his past from the brute,"why hold him accountable if, following the instincts of his remote ancestry, he is brutish?"; in other words, an animal will be an animal.[53] But Bryan said he was told by critics that it was God (or at least the concept of Him) who was brutish and immoral; Joshua's divinely ordered slaughtering of the Canaanites, man, woman, and

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[50]Bryan mentioned many different false "gods" that can be worshiped; these are the gods of gold, fashion, fame, ease, intellect, chance, rum, self, and more.

[51]Bryan, Famous Figures, 176; Orthodox, 45.

[52]Bryan, Orthodox, 44.

[53]Ibid.

child, was a great cruelty. Bryan countered that those who supported such notions were invariably those who "exalted Nature," yet nature was infinitely more cruel.[54]

Crueler still was Darwinism. Bryan stated that Darwin believed Christianity and even civilization itself (to Bryan there was virtually no distinction) weakened the human race. He quotes *Darwin* as saying,

> With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilized men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the progress of elimination. We build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor laws; our medical experts exert their utmost skill to save the lives of every one to the last moment . . . . Thus weak members of civilized society propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that *this must be highly injurious to the race of man* [emphasis added].[55]

Bryan pointed out that Darwin opposed temperance, on the grounds that alcohol "rendered a service to society by killing off degenerates." To all of this Bryan replied, "Can you imagine anything more brutal?" Bryan summarized, "If hatred is the law of man's development; that is, if man has reached his present perfection by a cruel law under which the strong kill off the weak . . ." then eliminating the law of love would benefit mankind. Bryan says Darwin's language proves that "Darwinism is directly antagonistic to Christianity."[56]

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[54]Bryan, Famous Figures, 29, 30.

[55]Bryan, Image, 107, 108.

[56]Ibid., 108, 110.

Bryan blamed this spiritually corrosive mentality for reducing human relationships to "life and death struggles from which sympathy and the spirit of brotherhood are eliminated." This is "the basis of the gigantic class struggle" in which the nation was engaged. Darwinist philosophies made both capitalists and labor more class conscious, much to the detriment of society.[57]

The social implications of Darwinism, especially the active application of Darwinian ideas (social Darwinism), worried the Commoner greatly. Darwin's theory of evolution was originally applied just to the field of biology; however, within just a few years of its debut in 1859, it began to have a major impact on social thought. British sociologist Herbert Spencer was the first to discuss the social implications of Darwinian revelations.[58] He coined, "survival of the fittest," a term Darwin would later use.[59] He and Darwin shared the same views regarding the "unfit" in society, ideas that left Bryan aghast. Spencer had a great impact on many people including other social scientists such as William Graham Sumner, Lester Ward, and John Dewey.[60] Sumner, whose ideas were mainly "derived from Spencer," greatly helped popularize social Darwinism in the United

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[57]Ibid., 125, 126.

[58]Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 5, 35-37. Spencer also synthesized concepts from physics to formulate his social theories.

[59]Ibid., 39.

[60]Ibid., 33, 34. Spencer would even have a profound impact on a young Clarence Darrow, who many years later would be an attorney opposing Bryan at the Scope's trial. Interestingly, Bryan and Darrow were Populist party allies in the campaign of 1896.

States.[61] Both men, and many social Darwinists in general, opposed social reforms because, ". . . all attempts to reform social processes were efforts to remedy the irremediable . . . they interfered with the wisdom of nature . . . [and] they could only lead to degeneration."[62] Spencer took this a bit further and, according to Hofstadter, believed the unfit "should be eliminated." Hofstadter said Sumner believed that the "eighteenth century" concept of equality, and the notion that all men were created equal, such as stated in the Declaration of Independence, was "ridiculous." Men were unequal and only the elite should rule.[63]

Other thinkers, including Ward, later moderated many of social Darwinism's harsher prescriptions. But the fact remains that a great many people were influenced by these earlier ideas; and captains of industry such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie whole-heartedly embraced them.[64]

The Commoner disagreed with the social Darwinist's preference for rule of an elite that understood and adhered to "laws" of natural selection. He made it clear that "democracy is better" than all other forms of government because it ". . . can draw from the wisdom of the people, and all of the people know more than any part of the people,"

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[61]Ibid., 55, 65.

[62]Ibid., 7

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid., 34, 45.

presumably even the elite. Regarding leadership, he believed a loving heart was the determining factor of "one's fitness for service."[65]

His views on reform were also in stark contrast to Spencer, Sumner, and others. Bryan wrote, "As hope deferred maketh the heart sick [borrowing from a biblical proverb as was his style], so the doctrine of Darwin benumbs altruistic effort by prolonging indefinitely the time needed for reforms."[66] Those who engaged in reforms and other progressive causes in the spirit of love will find themselves "happier" and find their work "eminently practical."[67]

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[65]Bryan, Image, 263. This is the opposite criteria of what social Darwinists called for. Their ideal leader had to be, at times, heartless, so he could allow the "unfit" to be eliminated for the greater good.

[66]Bryan, Image, 134: "As early as 1905" Bryan recognized the dangers Darwinian values presented to reform. While reading Darwin's The Descent of Man Bryan said that they would "weaken the cause of democracy and strengthen class pride and the power of wealth." See Willard H. Smith, 38.

[67]Ibid., 136, 162.

CHAPTER FIVE

WORLD WAR, NIETZSCHE, AND THE KIDD CONNECTION

Bryan saw greater, even more sinister applications of Darwinism during World War One. As Secretary of State during part of the Wilson Administration, as a private citizen promoting pacifism before America's entry into the war, and as a critic of Germany during U.S. involvement, William Jennings Bryan came to be disturbed by his observations of the war. He found the philosophies of Darwin permeating the thinking of entire nations, or at least their leaderships. More specifically, he was horrified by the effects and prospects of an outgrowth of Darwin's ideas: those of Friedrich Nietzsche's.

It became clearer and clearer to him as the war progressed that the German leadership increasingly relied on materialistic, Nietzschesque philosophical foundations.[1] After reading Nietzsche, Bryan said,

> Nietzsche carried Darwinism to its logical conclusion . . . . He not only rejected the Creator, but he rejected all moral standards. He praised war and eulogized hatred because it led to war . . . . He saw in man nothing but an animal and in that animal the mightiest virtue he recognized was 'The Will to Power' -- a will which should know no let or hindrance, no restraint or limitation.[2]

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[1]Bryan, Image, 123. "I secured the writings of Nietzsche and found in them a defense, made in advance, of all the cruelties and atrocities practiced by the militarists of Germany."

[2]Ibid. The Commoner saw the German philosopher trying to replace Christ with yet another false god, Nietzsche's "Superman."

Furthermore, "[Nietzsche] denounced Christianity as the doctrine of the degenerate, and democracy as the refuge of weaklings."[3] Nietzsche praised Darwin "as one of the great men of his century," noting that he was one of the thinkers from whom he borrowed and expanded upon.[4] Bryan, clearly believing the Darwin/Nietzsche connection with the World War, said, "To destroy the faith of Christians and lay the foundation for the [until then] bloodiest war in history would seem enough to condemn Darwinism."[5]

It struck Bryan like a thunderbolt that Darwinism, especially in its disseminated, undiluted, Nietzschesque form, could ravage society and lay waste everything he held precious: Not just weaken morality and inhibit progressive reform, which would be bad enough, but eliminate morality and *physically* destroy civilization via suicidal warfare. This realization lent gravitas and urgency to his later crusade against evolution.

Bryan was prompted to delve into Nietzsche, or at least German militarism, after coming into contact with other material. Some Bryan writers claim one such item was a

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[3]Bryan, Seven Questions, 146.

[4]Bryan, Image, 124. To Bryan this was no surprise considering Darwin already "drags man down to a brute level; then he judges man by brute standards and shuts the door of heaven against him." See Seven Questions, 146.

[5]Bryan, Image, 125: Several other anti-evolutionists commented on the Darwin-Nietzsche/ World War/ German militarism/ modernist connection. One fundamentalist referred to Nietzsche as "one-third brute, one-third devil, and one-third university professor," obviously insinuating the banality of evolutionist academicians. See Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1954), 26, 41.

book entitled Headquarter Nights, by Vernon Kellogg, published and read by Bryan in 1917.[6] Kellogg was a pacifist professor from Stanford University and a friend of Herbert Hoover. Kellogg went to work with Hoover for the Commission for the Relief of Belgium during World War One.[7] In Headquarter Nights Kellog appraises German militarism.[8] Kellogg visited the "Great Headquarters . . . of all the German Armies of the West," and spoke frankly with many top ranking German military personnel.[9] Kellogg discussed how the Germans' *Weltanschauung* rigorously applies the biological precepts of Darwinism to "human life, society, and *Kultur*," continuing for several pages about how horrifyingly serious these commanders were about applying these precepts to humanity.[10]

Kellogg was so upset by his revelations that he relinquished his pacifism, not an easy thing for him to do. He realized that something as monstrous as this philosophy

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[6]Willard H. Smith, 38, 91; Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 100. Vernon Kellogg, Headquarter Nights (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1917).

[7]Kellogg, 7.

[8]In the foreward, Theodore Roosevelt stated that the book "is a convincing, and an evidently truthful, exposition of the shocking, the unspeakably dreadful moral and intellectual perversion of character which makes Germany at present a menace to the whole civilized world." See Ibid., 13.

[9]This was possible through an arrangement carried out (and discontinued before American entry into the war) by the American Relief Commission. While there he apparently got to chat with top brass like Von Freytag, Von Zoellner, and Von Schoeler. See Ibid., 18-20. It would seem that they had no idea he would put their conversation to paper and analyze them.

[10]Ibid., 22-30.

must be fought and stopped at all cost; it must be stopped not simply for reasons of morality but also because it was imperative that these commanders be shown that they were following the "wrong evolutionary line." This would be in terms they would understand, that of Darwinism.[11] He prophesied that their emphasis on the German state as the supreme end-product of evolution would be a Frankensteinian monster that would lead to the destruction of the German nation.[12]

Such literature helped to convince Bryan of the wickedness of the German military leadership. Yet nowhere in Headquarter Nights is there mention of Nietzsche. Though Nietzsche may have been the proverbial ghost at the banquet, the philosophy described in the book smacks more of a synthesis of Darwin and Hegel than of Darwin and Nietzsche. Kellogg undoubtedly played a role in Bryan's focus on German militarism, but another source had far more impact the year before the Commoner had access to Headquarter Nights.

The writings of Benjamin Kidd, the British sociologist, led Bryan to see Nietzsche as the main conduit through which Darwinism was endangering civilization. Kidd played a pivotal role in guiding Bryan's thoughts on the whole issue of evolution. There are interesting similarities between the worldviews of Bryan and Kidd, affinities that probably provided Kidd with more credibility and poignancy in Bryan's eyes. But

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[11]Ibid., 23, 31, 96.

[12]Ibid., 83.

what truly stimulates interest is the intriguing and ironic fact that Kidd was a self-described social *Darwinist*, even if one with an atypical explication of his subject.[13]

Bryan read Kidd's best known works, Social Evolution (1894) and The Science of Power (1916).[14] If these books are studied in chronological order something of an evolution in Kidd's own thought can be discerned, as one book builds upon the other. Strangely enough, given the Bryan connection, Kidd made quite clear at the outset of Social Evolution that the process of evolution is absolutely fundamental in the workings of life; he said, "progress is a necessity, and it necessitates rivalry, even intra-special [sic] rivalry." Kidd pointed out that if every individual in a given species were allowed to reproduce with the same productivity, then a "process of slow but steady degeneration would ensue."[15] That is, in order for there to be evolutionary progress within a species, the more competent individuals of that species *must* produce more offspring than the rest. But Kidd qualified his assertion by remarking that this does not mean "that the extinction of less efficient forms has been the same thing as the extermination of the individuals comprising them."[16] So Kidd agreed with the Darwinian concept of natural

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[13]D.P. Crook, Benjamin Kidd, Portrait of a Social Darwinist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 352, 353.

[14]In regards to Bryan's reading of Social Evolution see Willard H. Smith, 27: For The Science of Power see Bryan, In His Image , 126; and Seven Questions, 146.

[15]Benjamin Kidd, Social Evolution (London and New York: Macmillan and Company, 1894), 35-37.

[16] Ibid., 38.

selection, insomuch as those with the best suited genes should carry them on at the expense of the genetic line of others. But he plainly disagreed with severe adherence to the Spencerian adage of "survival of the fittest." Outbreeding others is not necessarily the same as killing them.

In response to applications of Darwinian evolution to human society, Kidd took a "yes, but no" approach, and it is the negative component that set Kidd apart from other social Darwinists. Kidd believed that primitive humans lived the life of true brutes, where the raw forces involved in natural selection were at work ever adapting humans to their environment. But the inevitable progress caused by evolution made humans unwittingly form larger, more orderly societies. The more socially efficient among them prospered, replacing lesser forms.[17]

This is the point of Social Evolution. The more evolved a society, the more it is able to oblige its individual members to sacrifice and work for the good of the whole; but at the same time it allows for a heretofore unprecedented amount of individual expression and development. To Kidd, this was not a matter of a trade-off in a zero-sum game. He saw civilization as a dynamic system that evolved to higher states of energy that ideally balanced the expression of the community and the individual. In this way *both* could be affirmed with more vitality without doing so at the expense of one or the

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[17] Ibid., 39-45. This brings new relevance to Kidd's assertion that eliminating inefficient forms does not necessarily mean killing individuals. As Kidd's system is laid out, this becomes even more clear.

other. What was more revolutionary, still, was what Kidd conceived of as the catalyst that allowed society to transcend the threshold leading to the next evolutionary level: Religion. This is an item that got at least one Fundamentalist's attention.

Kidd said, individuals must take actions that seem irrational from their subjective view, actions that may not appear to be in their best interests as rational beings. But if they do not take these actions, the community as a whole will stagnate and social evolution will cease. Therefore, in order for there to be any social progress, there must be some vehicle by which individual humans can override their reason.

Kidd believed that one invariable feature of *all* functioning religions was "a supernatural sanction of some kind for acts and observances which have social significance."[18] The subordinating function of religion necessitates not just merely a belief in the supernatural on the part of the believers but a sustained emphasis on sacrifice.[19] Kidd believed that Christianity was the best suited religion for evolutionary purposes that had come along thus far.[20] He was especially impressed with the emphasis on sacrifice given by the example of Christ and in the social efficiency inherent in its

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[18]Ibid., 107.

[19]This is why "the conception of sacrifice has occupied such a central place in almost all beliefs, and why the tendency of religion has ever been to surround this principle with the most impressive and stupendous of sanctions." Ibid., 116.

[20]And one of the reasons why the West had become the most advanced civilization on the planet. More later on this in The Science of Power.

ethical system, the Golden Rule.[21] To Kidd, these characteristics were very conducive to socially organic behavior. One of Christianity's greatest effects is the "deepening and softening of character" it creates within the "power-holding class." This institutionalized sensitivity and altruism help create "great social and political movements" which are the key to evolutionary progress.[22]

Twenty-two years later, in 1916, Kidd greatly refined his thoughts in his next well-known book, The Science of Power. Often in The Science of Power Kidd substituted the term "integration" for evolution because "the mechanism of mind evolved in the past correspondence to those forces which produced the *individual integration* [emphasis original]." That is, the ability to reason aided the individual to evolve successfully in his or her particular environment, to "integrate" better with it. "Social integration" (the evolution of the race or civilization as a whole), however, can be summarized in one often irrational act: Sacrifice.[23]

According to Kidd, the worldview of his time was trying to synthesize the "psychology of individual integration [with the] psychology of social integration . . . ."

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[21]Ibid., 123-30.

[22]Ibid., 179-81. Though at first glance these statements can seem outlandish, Kidd probably meant this in a relative sense. Not all Western leaders have been kind and altruistic, to say the least. Yet many progressive phenomena have been nurtured by the upper class. Even today, Kidd would say, the elite's sense of *noblesse oblige* (in the American sense of the term) certainly stems from the West's Christian heritage. Marxists, among others, would beg to differ on the whole point.

[23]Kidd, The Science of Power (London: Macmillan and Company, 1916), 131.

Doing so based on reason is ill conceived if not impossible because "*civilization rests not on Reason but on Emotion* [emphasis Kidd's]."[24]

Whereas in his earlier work Kidd discussed the necessity of using religion as a vehicle to override reason, he actually talked about how that vehicle accomplishes this in The Science of Power. "It is the control of emotion, not the absence of it, which is the mark of high civilization. *Other things being equal, the higher and more complete the individual or the people, the higher and more complete the capacity for emotion* [emphasis original]."[25] Now Kidd gave a more complete picture of the social dynamic he first unveiled in Social Evolution.[26]

Kidd moved on to an entirely new concept, the "emotion of the ideal," as the originator and progressive catalyst of civilization. It is "the capacity for the emotion of the ideal and not his reasoning which constitutes Man the God-like, and which separates

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[24] Ibid., 123-24. Elsewhere Kidd stated, "Power in civilization rests on collective emotion, not on reason." See also Ibid., 107.

[25]Ibid., 124. Kidd ventured into the mystical, even if in his own scientific way, by stating, "Reason is essentially the knowledge of material force and not the knowledge of the world as it is." Perhaps that is one more reason why emotional and religious expression is pivotal-- they may give one a more accurate view of the world "as it is." See also Ibid., 122.

[26]Kidd said there is more than a vital tension between the individual and the community, but also one between the faculties of reason and emotion, as well as between the realms of the material and the spiritual. The more advanced the society, the more energy and tension is contained within the dynamic, on both sides.

him from the brutes."[27] Humanity's illogical, unexplainable striving for the supernatural, for that which is beyond reason, propels it to greater heights completely unattainable to other creatures. The emotion of the ideal can be channeled through religion, functioning as the evolutionary catalyst described in Social Evolution; but now he conceded that mystical, para-religious channels can also be employed to utilize it, such as "volkish" nationalism.

Intriguingly, human reason alone is not enough to separate "Man" from the "Brute." At some point in evolution, humanity crossed an invisible, indeterminant threshold that created a potential in mankind infinitely greater than that conceivable of mere animals. As touched upon in Social Evolution, Kidd calls this exclusive quality social, or psychic, inheritance. Two things created this potential. One was the ability to accumulate and record knowledge, or the creation of the body of the social inheritance. The other was the creation and transmission of that part of the inherited "psychic element which consists of ideas and idealisms that rest on emotion, and are conveyed to the young under the influence of psychic emotion . . . . The importance of [this psychic inheritance] is profound and *far exceeds that of inborn heredity in the individual* [emphasis added]."[28] Due to this revolution in the evolutionary process Kidd argues that inborn qualities have "almost nothing to do" with changes in civilization, for the better or

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[27]Ibid., 127, 132.

[28]Ibid., 121-22.

worse. Through culture a nation or civilization can be profoundly and permanently changed in one generation.[29] Kidd gave the remarkable advances of the German nation during the late nineteenth century as an example. A nation that did not even exist appeared, industrialized more swiftly than any other, and in one or two generations became a world power. Kidd triumphantly noted that this had nothing to do with genetics.[30] The German people did not suddenly improve genetically in fifty years. If anything, since more people were surviving into adulthood and reproducing more than ever before, the pool of inborn heredity probably degenerated to a certain degree. Nonetheless Germany excelled.[31] Kidd believed a large-scale conversion was possible in any society, or even globally.

Kidd applied his theories of social evolutionary development and social inheritance to the history of the West. He discussed a concept he called the Western "Fighting Pagan."[32] This pagan was the culmination of an intense process of military selection due to successive waves of invasions through Europe. Coupled with Greco-Roman rationality this Western man was well-suited for *individual* integration. Yet the

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[29]Ibid., 111-14, 128, 154.

[30] Ibid., 113-14.

[31]The process Kidd described that *transforms entire societies* through the emotion of the ideal "reduces to insignificance those possible by any eugenic scheme whatsoever founded on the inborn heredity of the individual . . . ." See also Ibid., 145.

[32]Ibid., 5.

West had also inherited a religion that was "the utter negation of force."[33] To him, this well-suited a civilization in terms of social integration.[34]

Kidd's greatest fear was that fifty years of Darwinian influence had almost undone over fifteen centuries of maturation in this respect. He said, "the essential pagan of the West turned in our time to the gross unimaginative materialism of military and economic war." It must be remembered that Kidd was writing this book as World War One was raging. Such activities and lusts are "essentially and profoundly *atavistic* [emphasis added]."[35] The problem with Darwinism and any civilization that accepts it is that they try to apply the standards of individual organization to social organization.[36]

Darwin's 1859 publication of Origin of Species sent Western minds into an unprecedented intellectual "saturnalia," becoming "within half a century . . . the bible of the doctrine of the omnipotence of force."[37] In the fifty years after its introduction it greatly changed the West. One effect of Darwinism, according to Kidd, was aggressive nationalism and militarism. He believed it affected Germany disproportionally. Kidd

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[33]Ibid.

[34]In light of the dynamic outlined by Kidd one could speculate that the West contains enormous amounts of energy on both sides of its social system and allows more organic social behavior coupled with unprecedented individuality relative to any other culture on Earth. The enormous, but harnessed, tensions within the West are responsible for this.

[35]Ibid., 39.

[36]Ibid., 197.

[37]Ibid., 45-47.

saw the repaganization of civilization first taking root in pre-unification Prussia.[38] It then blossomed with Bismark and both Kaisers pushing for "the idealization of war, the idealization of the German nation as resting on war." As a result "the rising generation" was continually exposed to "this *auswartig Kulturpolitik* [emphasis original], which may be translated to mean . . . the continuous presentation of national conceptions to the young mind of Germany . . . ." In essence, the German leadership utilized the emotion of the ideal effectively and helped to profoundly alter the German nation in short order.[39]

The West's misinterpretation of Darwin's ideas (not seeing the distinction between individual and social integration) might lead human civilization from the "world-shaking catastrophe" already taking place in the form of world war to an "irretrievable bankruptcy" in the form of the end of potential social progress.[40]

Kidd saw World War One in this light, and it must have been this aspect of Kidd's analysis that most affected Bryan. He blamed the war on all of these factors, but

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[38]Ibid., 23. A foreshadowing of this line of thinking occurs in the earlier book. Kidd declared that the original impetus for militarism in Prussia/Germany is the geopolitical fact that it is placed squarely between France and Russia. This added to Prussian/German fertility in regards to ready acceptance of the doctrine of force. See also Kidd, Social Evolution, 196.

[39]Ibid., 138. Kidd started to muse on how wonderfully different things could be if Germany had directed its psychic change in a different way: "It is a record, it is true, of immense power misdirected to atavistic ends." By using the emotion of the ideal to regress, Germany, and quite possibly the whole of the West, is engaging in an *evolutionary implosion.*

[40]Ibid., 82.

especially on the interpretations of Darwinism in Germany.[41] He strongly blamed Nietzsche, rightfully or not, for the direction of philosophical thought in Germany.[42] Kidd saw Nietzsche's influence on Germany as profound. He suggested that Nietzsche in some ways overshadowed even Bismark. "Nietzsche's teachings represented the interpretation of the popular Darwinism delivered with the fury and intensity of genius."[43] But, like Darwin, Nietzsche is wrong. The center of power is not oneself except in terms of individual integration.[44] Kidd said that though the West was "born of force," it evolved and developed another side that coincides with and overlays this brutal foundation. In this way the West has, through social integration (the development of the emotional, the spiritual, and even the religious) made up its mind to accept "right as being superior to force." But Nietzsche, especially, tried to tear away this modern layer. As a result "there is no event in humanity to compare with the drama of the meeting of these two epochs of human evolution in the life of the modern West."[45]

Nietzsche's Superman has the potential to utilize the emotion of the ideal. The people are motivated by irrational, mystical energies they share. This social energy is

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[41]Ibid., 137.

[42]Ibid., 56.

[43]Ibid., 61, 64.

[44]"The heredity through which power is transmitted is not in the individual. It is [in] the social heredity of cultural inheritance." See Ibid., 208.

[45]Ibid., 60.

then directed towards atavistic goals instead of towards further advancement in altruism and social harmony that could better advance both the individual and the community along the lines of Kidd's social dynamic. "Nietzsche gave Germany the doctrine of Darwin's efficient animal in the voice of his Superman." After this, the Superman voice, in the form of national policy and national mood, points Germany in the direction of aggressive nationalism and the worship of force.[46]

Regarding religion "it is in Nietzsche's writings that the Western mind first beholds laid bare with unspeakable fidelity that overmastering animal soul of the West which represents the individual efficient in the struggle for his own interests, of which Darwin gave us the science." In other words the Golden Rule is not merely silly, but irrelevant if not counterproductive. God is indeed "dead" in this view.[47]

Kidd concluded that "the master fact of the social integration is that the science of power in civilization is the science of the passion for the ideal . . . . The passion for the ideal is the passion of perfection, which is *the passion for God* [emphasis added]."[48] The only way for Western civilization to heal itself, and continue to progress socially, is to reemphasize the other side of the human equation, to rely on the emotional, the intangible, the spiritual. Religion is the only way, and God the only answer.

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[46]Ibid., 67. Throughout paragraph.

[47]Ibid., 56-60.

[48]Ibid., 158. Kidd used "passion for the ideal" interchangably with "emotion of the ideal," though seemed to prefer the latter.

One can see how Kidd's beliefs would be attractive to William Jennings Bryan. They shared the same conceptual agent by which community spirit and progress are generated, though they gave it a different name. To Kidd it was the "emotion of the ideal," to Bryan it was "heart." With either name it was the seat of emotion, the place where irrational forces could override individual reason for the good of the community. Either could revitalize whole nations in short periods of time.[49] It was the source of the spirit of sacrifice. It was the engine of reform.

These two unlikely ideological compatriots also shared at least the same general notion of the Prime Wielder of the aforementioned reformist tool. Both believed God acted on and/or through this catalyst of progress. To be sure, their specific, respective views of the Divine were significantly different, but both agreed on many of the progressive attributes of God.[50]

Most importantly, Bryan and Kidd shared the same dream. To both of them, history was a progression toward greater peace and understanding. To Kidd, the world had been evolving so as to contain more synergy, to accommodate greater individuality *and* stronger community. In the process relationships became more fruitful and less physical by definition. As will be discussed shortly, Bryan held a similar vision. Bryan

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[49]For Kidd this could be one generation, for Bryan, being a bit more optimistic, one day.

[50]Bryan's was the God of the Fundamentals. Kidd's was more a blend of deistic and pantheistic, notions Bryan could never have accepted.

partook in the post-millennial belief that the Kingdom of God was possible here and now. But sharing the same dream also meant sharing the same nightmare. This last connection altered Bryan's heretofore relative lack of urgency regarding Darwin. From then on, Darwin, via Nietzsche or otherwise, put Bryan's utopian future of world peace in jeopardy. This will be explored next.

After reading Kidd, it was clear to Bryan that the implications of any acceptance of Darwinian philosophy at the national level were enormous. Writing only five years after the end of World War One, he notes how the awesome atrocities of the conflict, "30 million dead, $300 billion in damage, huge debts . . . cannot be blamed on ignorance; the governments of the civilized nations have been in the hands of educated men . . . college graduates trained the armies . . . scientists mixed the poisonous gases." [51] A philosophy that could participate in the creation of such catastrophe would be an inherent threat to world peace, one of the Commoner's most treasured ideals.

If, as Kidd had warned, Nietzschesque philosophy was fast becoming "the politics of the modern state," then world peace was imperiled. Concerning the war Bryan observed, "Intellect guided the nations, and learning *without heart* [emphasis added] made war so hellish that civilization itself was about to commit suicide ." During the carnage, "Darwin's God was nowhere, -- he could not find him; Darwin's Bible was

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[51]Bryan, Orthodox, 26, 27.

nothing, -- it had lost its inspiration; Darwin's Christ was nobody, -- he had a brute for his ancestor on both his father's and mother's side."[52]

Bryan warned America not to get caught up in the madness of Old World competition for navies or preparing for war to keep peace; building armaments as a deterrent was "brutal . . . [and] un-Christian."[53] Great nations and empires of old relied on such schemes, eventually thinking themselves to be invincible. But, he said, this is a fallacy, ". . . these nations are dead, and we must build upon a different foundation if we would avoid their fate . . . love is the greatest power in the world . . . the enlightened conscience of our nation should proclaim as the country's creed that 'righteousness exalteth a nation' and that justice is a nation's surest defense."[54] Bryan stated that Christ alone can bring peace.[55] He strongly asserted that biblical principles applied to nations as if they were individuals writ large, a position Bryan held even in his days as Secretary of State.[56] Peace can only become a reality when all men know they are brothers in that they are all children of the same God. Bryan believed that a day would come when wars

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[52]Ibid.

[53]He wrote this around the time of the Washington Naval Conference.

[54]Throughout the opening of the paragraph, Bryan, Image, 192, 193.

[55]Bryan, Famous Figures, 164; Orthodox, 27.

[56]Willard H. Smith, 118.

between nations would become as silly, uncivilized, and abhorrent as family feuds were in his time.[57]

The Commoner pointed out that in war issues were decided on the principle of "might makes right."[58] This Darwinian notion inevitably ends in self-destruction, "progress is suspended, and even defeated, by the very genius it is supposed to develop." Darwinism leads to war and to worship of Nietzsche's Superman.[59] Bryan thought it was important to remember that the Bible tells of the "Prince of Peace" heralding the day "when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares and when nations shall learn war no more."[60] In this view, God never made strength dependent upon violence. To Bryan there was a lot at stake. It was imperative that the future be defended from the threat of Darwinism. In an attempt to ensure this defense, Bryan promoted an idea that to many

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[57]Ibid., 77, 78.

[58]Bryan attacked Theodore Roosevelt for criticizing Tolstoy's rejection of the "might makes right" philosophy. Regarding T.R. Bryan fumed, "Mr. Roosevelt is the exponent of the brute force idea -- with him man is an animal . . . [he] thinks that man would degenerate without an occasional . . . bloodletting." See Smith, 72, 73.

[59]Ray Ginger mocked the Nietzsche connection as the fundamentalist indulging in "irrational fears." However, he does not mention Kidd or others of similar beliefs; see Ginger, 29. Even Hofstadter, in his seminal work on social Darwinism, whose book Ginger had access to, *agreed with the Nietzsche assessment*; see Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 192-200. Osborn, Bryan's tormentor-scientist, conceded in their long running debate that, "even [the] speculative or rationalistic side of Darwin's philosophy has largely failed." See Osborn, 64. That is exactly what alarmed Bryan about Darwinism.

[60]Bryan, Image, 132-35.

seemed intolerant and even totalitarian; to him it was not only democratic, but *absolutely necessary*. This indispensable concept was presented by Bryan in his crusade against the teaching of Darwinism in schools.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SCOPES TRIAL AND THE FINAL ELEMENTS OF BRYAN'S WORLDVIEW

The Scopes trial of 1925 focused attention on the teaching of Darwinism in schools, but it was only part of the larger war over Darwinism in the schools. Both this larger conflict and the trial that would come to symbolize it reveal some final pieces of Bryan's belief system.

In the South, during the early 1920s, several states passed laws prohibiting the teaching of evolution. These laws also required mentioning the biblical creation story of man and the world. Attempts to pass similar laws in northern states failed. Bryan trekked through many states agitating for anti-evolution laws and was successful in more that one instance in generating action.[1] The state of Tennessee passed such a law due to the efforts of state legislator John Washington Butler.[2] He believed, like Bryan, that the Bible was the foundation of American democracy; if Darwinism denied the Bible, then it "undermines the foundation of our government."[3] Bryan came to Dayton, Tennessee, in

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[1]Furniss, 81-84. This is true in the cases of Florida and Kentucky.

[2]Ginger, Six Days, 1-4. Butler was concerned when a young woman in his hometown returned from college an atheist and evolutionist. He then worried about his children when he learned that Darwinism was being taught in their schools. This was in 1921. By 1924 his bill passed.

[3]Ibid.

July of 1925 to participate, as a lawyer, in the prosecution of John Scopes, the high school teacher accused of teaching evolution in violation of state law. To Bryan, the arguments against such teaching in schools were clear, and he discussed these points in the trial, but especially in his writings.

Bryan's main argument was that, in a democracy, "the majority has the right to rule," except where the rights of the minority are protected by the Constitution. This constitutional provision, in his mind, merely defended the rights of the minority from "invasion," it did not authorize the minority to invade the rights of the majority.[4] In Bryan's opinion, this last point was exactly what was happening.[5] Teachers did not have the right, as individuals, to teach as they pleased; they should not be teaching, as science, a guess (and a "bad" one at that) "that undermines the religious faith of Christian taxpayers." In Bryan's view, this was not an infringement on the teachers' rights. Outside of the schools they could say whatever they wanted.[6]

In the Commoner's thinking, when one took on a "representative" role, that person no longer represented his or her own views, but those of the represented. He gave as an example how, in a church, freedom of thought must be suppressed; "how can a church

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[4]Bryan, Orthodox, 46. See also, Seven Questions, 153.

[5]Bryan figured that there were at most 12,000 scientists and academicians "imposing" their Darwinian views on the rest of the nation, a very small minority amounting to approximately one in every 10,000 Americans. See Bryan, Seven Questions, 154, 155.

[6]Bryan, Orthodox, 45, 46.

exist unless it stands for something?" he asked. Preachers should be restricted, as preachers, to saying what the church believes. But, "As individuals, every one is free to believe anything . . . " it was a right of an American, the very essence of freedom of conscience, but it should be reserved for "individuals."[7] So too must a government "stand for something," and its representatives, at least in public schools, must represent the will of the Christian taxpayers.[8]

Regarding those in support of teaching evolution, he said they could build their own schools as many Christians had felt compelled to do.[9] If school districts or states decided that Creationism should not be taught in schools, that was fine; in such a case the schools should be neutral, "If the Bible cannot be defended . . . it should [also] not be attacked."[10]

Ginger obviously criticized Bryan's majority-representation concept, and not without some reasons, not the least of which was that the constitutionality of such an approach was seriously flawed. Ginger quotes Walter Lippmann as saying, "[To Bryan] 'all men were created equal before God' meant 'all men are equally good biologists before

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[7]Ibid., 15, 16.

[8]At one point Bryan asks if America would tolerate teachers openly advocating monarchy or anarchy. His answer was that of course they would not.

[9]Bryan, Orthodox, 46; Seven Questions, 156.

[10]Bryan, Image, 122.

the ballot box . . . ."[11] But both Lippmann and Ginger may have missed the point. Though Bryan was, to some degree, implying that the average voter could determine for himself or herself what was good science and what was not, there was much more to it than that. The Commoner was stating that the average voter could determine whether they wanted to jeopardize all that he or she held dear for the teaching of what, by Bryan's standard, amounted to a guess.

Bryan's majority-representative concept, though seemingly narrow and excessive, highlighted his belief in "the people," and is not necessarily a departure from his "Commoner" roots. But Bryan's zealotry did show an unarguably excessive side at times.[12] He was, however, very concerned that such overzealousness would be hurtful for all involved.[13]

Strong feelings were apparently unavoidable during the Scopes trial. By the end of the last full day, Bryan and Darrow were reportedly standing and shaking fists at one

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[11]Ginger, 35, 36. Ginger says, "Bryan's ear was ill-tuned to the cacophony of ordinary facts."

[12]Furniss, 97. After Bryan had given a speech, Edward A. Birge, president of the University of Wisconsin, thought Bryan's logic poorly worded and that this could hurt Bryan's cause. Though Birge sympathized with Bryan in actuality, Bryan overheard and misinterpreted his remarks, included him with the enemy, and proceeded to feud with the man the rest of his days.

[13]Bryan and Bryan, Memoirs, 485, 486. Mrs. Bryan relates how in their last conversation together they discussed the "narrow path" between the "perfectly legitimate work" of keeping checks on the actions of public servants (such as Mr. Scopes) and allowing their zeal to encroach on private belief.

another. During the trial, Bryan did not explain his logical, step-by-step arguments against Darwinism with anywhere near the clarity he had in his writings.[14] One explanation is that he may not have been fully prepared to debate the merits (or lack thereof) of Darwinism.[15] But this is not likely.[16] Another explanation is that the heat was bothering him so his performance was affected.[17] Regardless, Bryan's performance was not as pathetic as it has been portrayed. In relation to Bryan's supposed attitude of intolerance, his opponent, Darrow, was certainly no better, perhaps worse.[18] At one point, Darrow yelled at Bryan, "I am examining you on your fool ideas that no intelligent Christian on earth believes."[19]

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[14]Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind, An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950), 183.

[15]In their memoirs, Mrs. Bryan says that, to them, the whole point of the trial was to prove Mr. Scopes guilty "and efforts of the opposition to make the case hinge on the truth or lack of truth in the theory of evolution were out of place." See Bryan and Bryan, Memoirs, 483, 484.

[16]By the look of Bryan's "Last Speech," which he was to deliver as the closing argument of the trial, he seemed very prepared.

[17]It was July in Tennessee. The courtroom temperature is reported to have reached almost 100 degrees at points.

[18]Commager agrees that Darrow made "anti-Fundamentalists" look equally ridiculous.

[19]This and other interesting episodes are neglected in works like Inherit the Wind ; also, interestingly, Bryan had said years before the trial that liberals were just as dogmatic as conservatives on these issues. Whereas the latter called their opponents "un-Christian," the former used the adjectives "unintelligent" and "ignorant." See Bryan, Orthodox, 13.

Arguably the most persistent misconception of Bryan comes from a misrepresentation, done for artistic effect, of Bryan's belief in the length of creation. In the play, Inherit the Wind, Matthew Harrison Brady, Bryan's fictional alter-ego, stated that, ". . . the Lord began the Creation on the 23rd of October in the year 4,004 B.C at – uh, at 9 A.M.!", to which Darrow's facsimile replied, "[Is] that Eastern Standard Time?"[20] This, though amusing, is inaccurate.

The fact is, Bryan was more liberal on some points than most would assume; he left a small crack in the door open to evolution for reasons that are very telling. During the trial, Darrow asked him, "Do you think the earth was made in six days?" Bryan replied, "Not six days of twenty-four hours," and later qualified his statement, "[not] necessarily a twenty-four hour day . . . I think it would be just as easy for the kind of God we believe in to make the earth in six days or in six million years or six hundred million years. *I do not think it is important* [emphasis added] that we believe one or the other ."[21] What he did think was important has already been covered in detail. He concedes again that "[Creation] might have continued for millions of years." Bryan almost surely used his knowledge of the Bible to come to this conclusion.[22]

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[20]Lawrence and Lee, 119, 120.

[21]Leslie H. Allen, ed., Bryan and Darrow at Dayton (New York: Russell and Russell, 1925), 153. Bryan also says, "I believe in creation, as there told, and if I am not able to explain it, I will [still] accept it."

[22]Ibid., 154. Bryan was very likely aware of Psalms 90:4, which reads, "For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the

Very surprisingly, Bryan wrote in 1909,

> I do not carry the doctrine of evolution *as far as some do* [emphasis added]. . . I do not mean to find fault with you if you want to accept it . . . It is true that man, in physical qualities, resembles the beast . . . [but to follow Darwin] one must exercise more faith than religion calls for . . . ."[23]

Here, he left open the possibility that he accepted the theory to some degree. Also, his openness to those who would wholly accept it is in sharp contrast to his later stance. One can only conclude that events of the intervening decade changed his attitude regarding at least the effects of Darwinism; and, from what has been uncovered about his fear of the Nietzsche connection, World War One acted as the catalyst for this change.

Even after this change, however, certain weaknesses in his ordinarily adamant posture on Darwinism still existed. "There is no mortification in admitting that there are *insoluble mysteries* [emphasis added]; but it is shameful to spend the time that God has given for nobler use in vain attempts to exclude God from his own universe."[24] At first, this seems quintessentially Bryan. But he admits that one can never know, absolutely, whether Darwin was wrong. On the next page he wrote, "Evolution in plant and in animal life . . . *might* . . . *be admitted* [emphasis added] without raising a presumption

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night." This verse can be seen as denoting God's relative view of time. To Him, one thousand years can seem like a day, or even a "watch" (apx. one-third of a night); so it follows that He can see a "day" as any length of time.

[23]Ginger, Selections, 139, 140. From "Prince of Peace" speech.

[24]Bryan, Image, 103. This was written in 1922, after he had already formulated his opinion on Darwin's connection with World War One.

that would compel us to give a brute origin to man ."[25] Here is another chink in the armor. It seems Bryan did sincerely think that Darwinism was "bad science," and that it should not be taught in schools because the "majority" ought to be "represented" properly. His own reservations about his positions lead to an enlightening conclusion: These things were *utterly* secondary to his main concern; Bryan believed that Darwinism was horrifically harmful, period.

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[25]Ibid., 104.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FORM OF APPLIED FUNDAMENTALISM

In attempting to summarize Bryan's value system, Ray Ginger wrote: "Civilization cannot exist without morality. Morals rest on religion. Religion rests on a belief in God. Belief in God rests on the authority of the Bible. Darwinism undermines belief in the Bible."[1] Despite its brevity this analysis is relatively accurate, but by sacrificing length it also limits understanding of a worldview that is more sophisticated than a few brief sentences can convey. From the material thus presented regarding Bryan's reaction to Darwinism a more suitable analysis can be performed. This analysis uncovers two self-generating scenarios inherent in Bryan's thinking. In fact, these scenarios more resemble cycles, one positive, one negative. Both share two connections side by side, joined at the hip: The Bible, and the political arena. Either connection has the power to tip the scales toward progress or degeneration, a cycle of love or a cycle of death.

To sustain the first cycle, Bryan saw it as his duty to support and cherish the five fundamentals of Christianity and then apply them in the world. This was his paradigm for progress. Failure to do these things precipitated the second, destructive cycle, inviting catastrophe. For Bryan, the stakes were high.

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[1]Ginger, Six Days, 39.

To Bryan, God, with His law of love, is the source of all progress. The only door through which this Prime Source reveals Himself is the Bible. The Bible is the gateway to all that is important, the junction between God and humanity. Biblical revelation creates faith. Faith stimulates the Christianized heart. The seat of emotion is directed by God. This God-directed heart leads the mind to do good. The faculty of reason is harnessed by love to do the will of God instead of carrying out its own intentions.[2] The will of God is expressed in the collective, underlying the wisdom of the people. Therefore, democracy, the will of the majority, is the most efficient means to channel God's will on Earth. God will use politics to render reform and support progress, and government can be an ally in fulfilling these goals.

If God's will is continually disseminated in this way, the process will lead to the development of God's Kingdom on Earth. But in order to ensure the continuation of the process, those who support God's plan must use their God-given free will, and *loop back* to the beginning to support the foundation, the Bible, and concurrently, the fundamentals. This completes the positive cycle.

Interestingly, Bryan sometimes called his belief system "Applied Christianity," which was obviously his mission. Unfortunately for him, another reformer named Washington Gladden had already acquired this label for his belief system.[3] But because

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[2]Here the uncanny resemblance to Kidd's "emotion of the ideal" is clear.

[3]Willard H. Smith, 21-23.

of Bryan's specific emphasis on the five fundamentals, a more appropriate name for his belief system is "Applied Fundamentalism," and now it is clear why.

In the view of Applied Fundamentalism, the Bible is the lynchpin. Take away biblical revelation and the whole cycle of progress loses the source of its energy, its access to the One True God. To Bryan, however, Darwinism threatened exactly this and more. Bryan's "principal objection" to Darwinism was that it attacked the notion of the infallibility of the Bible and therefore undermined faith. The infallibility of the Bible was the first fundamental. This opened the door to an attack on the rest. One by one, the other four fundamentals would be negated.[4] Picking and choosing from the Bible what was true and was not was to him supremely egotistical since each person would have his or her own analysis and would choose his or her own morality, as if God themselves. To Bryan it was all or nothing.

From this starting point a degenerative cycle would begin. With the fundamentals invalidated a ladder of descent would ensue.[5] Man would no longer be seen as being made in God's image. The special creation of humans and their subsequently special

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[4]Again, the five fundamentals of Fundamentalism were: One, the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible via humans; two, Christ was born of a virgin; three, Christ was a sacrifice made to reconcile humanity to God; four, Christ rose from the dead; five, Jesus had supernatural powers and performed miracles on Earth.

[5]This ladder, discussed in a footnote earlier, does not directly correspond to the loss of each fundamental in synch, but follows its own logic, one that follows from the simultaneous loss of all five fundamentals. This would be the case because once the first fundamental was lost, so were the rest.

relationship with God would be torn asunder. Belief in miracles would cease. Therefore, the most important miracle of all, Christ's virgin birth, would be discredited. It naturally follows that Christ was not divine. If Christ was not the Deity then there was no atonement as a result of his death. No ransom was made. This renders original sin either nonexistent or not important. On this point Bryan raged that those who attack or belittle Christ's sacrifice and atonement for humanity's sins "deny that Man ever fell," and he says, "they contend that Man has been rising from the beginning." Since evolutionists discount all that pertains to original sin or the path to reconciliation with God as a result of it, Bryan laments, "There's no place in evolution for the cry of the penitent soul."[6] Thus the resurrection was a lie and Christianity in its entirety a falsehood. The conclusion of this slide is agnosticism and atheism. And with the inherent sinfulness of human nature no longer arrested in the mass of people, democracy perversely degrades from the channeler of God's will to anarchic mob-rule.

Darwinism weakens humanity by destroying the true spiritual standard. And just as the strong spiritual base of the progressive cycle translates into positive action in the world, so too would a lack of spiritual base translate into worldly negativity. Darwinism would open a void to be filled by false gods, materialism, and callousness. It would be a world devoid of love. He railed against the establishment of the gods of ease, sensuality,

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[6]Bryan, Orthodox, 17, 25. Bryan *definitely believed in original sin*, that human nature is inherently depraved. Ginger and Anderson, as discussed, missed this completely. The latter went so far as to state Bryan's disbelief in original sin.

chance, self, mind. But worst of all Darwinism bases spirit on the material world, producing a "No-God," a negation of Christianity. Without "heart," or a Christianized seat of emotion, intellect or "mind-worship," coupled with fatalistic, predetermined, uninhibited animal-nature instinct would lead nations to the brink of suicide (as in in World War One) and perhaps beyond the brink in the future. Human relationships are reduced to life and death struggles by evolutionary doctrine. Reform becomes counterproductive by aiding mainly the weak.

This conclusion was strongly influenced by Benjamin Kidd. Bryan agreed with Kidd that God, via the heart, was absolutely necessary for social progress at every level. Like Kidd, and probably because of Kidd, he saw Nietzsche utilizing Darwinism, distilling it into an even more potent form. Bryan came to see Darwinism-Nietzscheism as anti-Christianity. This antithetical religion was anti-progress, anti-heart, anti-peace; ploughshares are to be beaten into swords and Zarathustra to be worshiped instead of Christ. Kidd helped convince Bryan that this Superman philosophy was becoming the policy of the modern state, especially Nietzsche's homeland. Bryan reminded everyone that the Great War was not caused by ignorance: Educated elites controlled the governments, the media, and the militaries.

Bryan warned that nations and empires of the past tried to become "self-reliant," trusting in their military prowess for protection instead of having faith in God. Now they are gone. He believed Christ alone brings peace, and God alone should be necessary for protection. Bryan warned America not to get caught up in the competitive arms race

madness aggravated by Nietzsche. Bryan believed America was the best positioned nation to demonstrate to the world, by example, the virtues of Christian civilization. If America succumbed to this insanity, a great opportunity would be dashed, and all hope would be lost.

Bryan not only thought Darwinism cruel and dangerous, but "bad science" as well. Bryan stated that science, in and of itself, is good for humanity. He sincerely believed that science and Christianity were one hundred percent compatible, but Bryan regarded Darwinism as unworthy of real science. It did not belong along side proven facts. His was an older paradigm for scientific validity.

Bryan made theoretical allowances for evolution, tacit accommodations not well-known or pursued by biographers and investigators. Amazingly, one can find room for common ground between Bryan and the "theistic evolutionists" he so derided but for one thing: Bryan thought it too dangerous even to give the impression of compromise where the Bible was concerned. It was simply too risky to meddle with. He agreed he intellectually "carried" the theory of evolution to a certain extent, that there may be *something* to it. He agreed that the Creation account of six days could be and probably was a metaphor. *But it did not matter.*[7] What was important was the message behind the account. Bryan was sure no real science would ever contradict that message, and equally

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[7]It is important to note that literal belief in the six days was not one of the five fundamentals. Moreover, many fundamentalists accept the thousand day for a year concept mentioned earlier, so Bryan's purity as a "fundamentalist" is not in question.

sure that any speculative science should not be given even the smallest opportunity to undermine it.

Just as the two opposing cycles of progress and regression meet at the point of biblical infallibility, they also meet at the political arena, the world-at-large. It is here at the end of the positive cycle, just as the cycle is about to start anew by reaffirming the Bible, that Bryan sees Darwin's disciples trying to undermine that continuity. By trying to undermine the Bible's authority, by trying to supplant God with their No-God, the diabolic cycle recently described cascades into action, becoming as self-generating as the progressive cycle.

So it is in the political arena that the battle lines are drawn. That is the bifurcation point. The decision is made there whether spiritual energies will be channeled to progress by supporting the Word of God, or for degeneration by denying the Word. On this score, Bryan identified the Darwinists' strategy. First, he recognized their attempts to advance evolution via minority opinion. From his point of view this is the only way they could even conceivably be successful. As a result of centuries of progress, divine wisdom had been implanted in the people. Democracy taps into this resource. For the Commoner "the voice of the people was the voice of God."[8] But individuals and small groups are not coupled to this wisdom. It can only be expressed through majority

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[8]Hibben, 65. Hibben wrote that Bryan was so enthralled by this concept that "he would cheerfully have submitted the Westminster Catechism to popular vote and abided the result." Hibben was certainly mocking Bryan, as was his style, but there is some truth to his statement.

opinion. To Bryan's mind, in American democracy the majority has the right to rule, except where the majority "invades" the minority's rights. Minorities are protected from this. But this goes both ways, and the minority should not be allowed to violate the majority.

As mentioned, Bryan believed this balance could be struck, on the one hand, by holding those of the minority opinion to the idea of "representation." If such a person were holding a public position (such as a school teacher), that person must represent that institution, as that institution is representing the whole.[9] On the other hand, minority constituents have the right to form their own private institutions (such as schools that teach Darwinism).

The second part of the Darwinists' strategy identified by Bryan was their focus on children. The children are the future. If any group is interested in institutionalizing their ideology, children are the best investment for their time and energy. Bryan knew very well the influence teachers can have over impressionable young minds. For this reason, Bryan hoped for the creation of a system of schools that would be designed to enhance the "spiritual enthusiasm" of children.[10]

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[9]To Bryan, the whole would be represented either by the views of the majority, or, if that opinion were unduly oppressive to the minority, the whole would be represented by a neutral position. In the case of evolution, Bryan was open to not having Creationism taught in the public schools as long as Darwinism was not either.

[10]Bryan, Seven Questions, 149.

One Bryan biographer, Lawrence W. Levine, points out that there was ultimately a "pragmatic tone" to Bryan's philosophy. There was not just the fact of God, but a *need* for God. This necessitated the equally pragmatic need for the Bible, an inerrant Bible. This meant an unceasing defense and promotion of this critical link between God and the worldly realization of His Kingdom. Moreover, this meant challenging what he saw as lax, speculative standards of science. Lastly, it meant supporting the democratic method, as he understood it, to ensure that the wisdom of the people would not be extinguished. On these three fronts Bryan was both determined and confident, for he and his compatriots believed that God was on their side, science was on their side, and the law was on their side.[11] This was the hope and faith of Applied Fundamentalism.

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[11]Bryan, Orthodox, 46.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BEGINNING A SEARCH FOR CONTEXT: THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

The form of Bryan's philosophy, his theology, his ontological perspective, is complete and clear. The Commoner's reaction to Darwinism delineates both the hierarchial structure and especially the cyclical nature of Bryan's thoughts and values. What is still to be examined is the place of Applied Fundamentalism within the larger context of American history; the placement of the various historical components or inheritences within Bryan's worldview will be analyzed as well. Several important elements of history supplied the substance of his worldview: The Second Great Awakening, Transcendentalism, Jacksonianism, Populism, and even to some extent, paradoxically, the Hamiltonian-Whig legacy.

Since Bryan's life was largely, if not completely, removed from the time-frame in which many of these historical phenomena occurred or were first generated, it is necessary to reiterate Bryan's connection with them.[1] Both of Bryan's parents conferred on him the unyielding Christian faith they themselves acquired during the Second Great Awakening. Young William's pivotal conversion experience involved a denomination that was at the time fully captivated by the zealous New Light, essentially post-Calvinist

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[1]His connection to Populism is, however, self-evident.

Evangelicalism born of the Awakening. From his father Bryan inherited a robust Jacksonian tradition and a glimpse of proto-Populist politics. Bryan's personal record reveals a connection with Transcendentalism, and indeed with all of the aforementioned items, removing any difficulty in understanding their place in Bryan's worldview and that of Applied Fundamentalism in the context of history. Of these items three (the Second Great Awakening, Transcendentalism, and Jacksonianism) are most integral, supplying the underlying foundation of the system. All three took place in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and it is indeed this time period that generated the core of Bryan's beliefs.

There are, however, three difficulties involved in effectively outlining these historical elements. One is that these three issues share considerable overlap other than just in time. They are often difficult to separate. Second, they are not entirely coherent movements. This easily leads to the third problem which is that scholars often disagree on the parameters and meanings of these historical categories. So it will be arduous to explain the context of Applied Fundamentalism. What is at issue here, however, is Bryan's worldview and *its* place, not sweeping arguments of history and historiography. So only issues generally relevant to the development of Applied Fundamentalism will be dealt with, utilizing an ecumenical, consensus approach to the larger issues involved.

Religion was most fundamental to Bryan's belief system. Therefore, the Second

Great Awakening is the best point to embark on a search for context.[2] The Bible and both its inerrancy and necessity played the primary role for Bryan. The Second Great Awakening is not special in containing proponents of biblical inerrancy (and by no means did all do so during it), but it does demonstrate unique qualities that conclusively correlate to Bryan's system.

William G. McLoughlin, a leading expert on awakenings and revivals, theorizes that awakenings in general are "revitalization movements," when the culture, the inner world, seismically shifts to catch up with changing realities in the outside world. He claims, "they eventuate in basic restructurings of our institutions and redefinitions of our social goals . . . and are [therefore] therapeutic and cathartic, not pathological." Awakenings are not "intellectual movements . . . they are, in fact, often anti-intellectual in the sense that they rely more on intuitive or emotional responses (the religious affections) than on rational constructs."[3]

This was especially true for the Second Great Awakening. McLoughlin postulates that this awakening was, in part, spawned by new child-rearing practices that eroded deference to authority in the decades prior to the Awakening, "But rationalized

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[2]Also sometimes called the Transcendental Awakening, or the period of Romantic Evangelicalism, among other names.

[3]William Gerald McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 2, 102. McLoughlin is a master of synthesis on this subject. His books on revivals utilize an impressive and comprehensive collection of renowned works germane to the awakening phenomena. From this he presents astute and thought-provoking patterns.

beliefs for these new behavioral patterns had yet to be articulated and experienced."[4] This created social dislocation. Furthermore, there was tension between the Calvinist teachings of a whimsical, arbitrary God on the one hand, and the Enlightenment Deistic notion of a reasonable, rational God on the other. Most Americans did not hold purely to either of these positions. They were somewhere in between. But this paradigm of dichotomy did not easily allow for the middle ground most American found themselves in, and especially "the young were torn between an outmoded Calvinism and deistic infidelity."[5] This added to yet more cultural tension and dysfunction.

A large part of the result, according to McLoughlin, was an "Arminianized Calvinism" produced by the Awakening that arose in response to the aforementioned tensions. Others, such as Perry Miller, say the result was a new "romantic nationalism" in turn caused by a novel "romantic evangelicalism."[6] This new religious form was different in many ways from its predecessors. One was that Jesus took a more central,

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[4]Ibid., 115-16. McLoughlin believed these new practices came as a result of a synthesis between: One, the Enlightenment view in the inherent goodness of people; and two, the Romantic view that children are closer to God. For further insight into these changes in regards to deference in the years between the Revolution and the Second Great Awakening see Gordon S. Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

[5]Ibid., 100, 109.

[6]William G. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1959), 13; McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 106. "Arminian" refers to opposing the Calvinist notion of absolute predestination and instead promoting the idea that salvation is open to all.

personal role vis-a-vis God the Father; moreover Jesus became a more affectionate (critics say a more effeminate and motherly) figure.[7] But more importantly it created the potential for a new split in theology; but one, McLoughlin and others would argue, that was more conducive to the current state of affairs. The cutting edge arguments were now out in the open. It was mostly a division between those who held to old religious standards and those who held to new ones. But this division was seemingly easier to straddle than the old.

Neo-Edwardsian/"Consistent Calvinism" was now the "Old Light" of this new awakening. The "central task for the [New Lights] was to assert the responsibility of men to choose right or wrong without limiting the power of God," according to McLoughlin. One New Light champion, Nathaniel W. Taylor, synthesized Newtonian physics with Calvinism much like Jonathan Edwards had done a century before, but Taylor used Newton in a way that supported free agency as opposed to Edwards's buttressing of predestination. To Taylor, God's universe operates more on fixed moral laws than it does physical ones. Moral laws imply moral agents, and this implies free will. This "rational" deduction was common in the Second Great Awakening, especially among those who categorically repudiated core Calvinist notions.[8] But not all New Lights did so. Charles Finney, for example, still partially held to some of these precepts, and believed Taylor

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[7]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 120; Ashby, 3.

[8]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 117, 125.

and others went astray on some matters.[9] The latter, for their part, thought Finney and his ilk, though too conservative regarding the tenets of Calvinism, were too radical regarding the expression of religious emotion.[10] And there were many in between on these matters, mixing and choosing in different ways. In this new paradigm there was a true continuum where people could plant themselves firmly in the middle, unlike in the pre-Awakening arrangement, where the middle more resembled limbo.[11]

One other important continuum of division present in the Awakening concerned the significance of original sin. Some in the "New School" rejected it outright. Among many there was a consequent de-emphasis on Christ's sacrifice for atonement. These people preferred to view Christ as sacrificing Himself because he *wished* to. He proactively sacrificed for humankind, rather than reactively to correct a past mistake. This they interpreted as an even better example of sacrificial love than the atonement version offered.[12]

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[9]Charles Finney explained his view on predestination by saying conversion was like voting for God and voting against the devil. This was later to be *precisely* Bryan's view on divine election. See Michael Kazin, The Populist Persuasion: An American History (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 11.

[10]Ibid., 99, 101, 122.

[11]What consolidates Second Great Awakening New Lights into one, rough category are their eclectic resolutions to the original conflict between Calvinist doctine of depraved human nature and an "angry God," and Deism with its more positive view of humanity.

[12]Ibid., 116-20.

Others, notably Charles Finney, affirmed original sin and the necessity of atonement. This notion remained central to most evangelicals. It signified the "depravity" of human nature and the "diseased condition of the soul." Yet, even Finney changed emphasis to a certain degree on two points. First, he was open to original sin not being necessarily "guilt for Adam's transgression [but] as a sinful condition stemming from it."[13] This was a delicate decoupling from ancient tradition. He also objected to the notion that people cannot seek Jesus and save themselves even if they understand their situation and even if they have the feeling for God in their heart. This was a distinct break from Calvinist doctrine. Overall, the Evangelicalism stemming from the Second Great Awakening still held the inherent sinfulness of man to be a central organizing principle of its worldview. What had changed was the way in which the anxiety inherently caused by a sincere belief in original sin was channeled.[14]

Evangelicals typically adhered to the idea that "the function of God's sanctifying grace . . . is to turn human drives into holy channels."[15] To the Evangelicals the tool used by God to channel these now-purified drives was: "the heart."

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[13]Timothy L. Smith, The Legal Mind in America: From Independence to the Civil War (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Press, 1962), 95.

[14]Timothy L. Smith, 95-97, 114; Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.,1965), 33.

[15]Timothy L. Smith, 144.

According to Perry Miller, "Finney's basic theorem" and that of most Second Great Awakening preachers and New Light theologians was "everybody can agree upon intellectual propositions. The difference is that some grasp them with the heart, others with only the mind." Finney pointed out angels and demons both intellectually know the same things, but this information is directed differently in their hearts.[16] Finney and company see a more "reasonable" God than Old Light Calvinists. To the New Lights, if God asked men to change their hearts and come to Him, it can be reasonably expected that He gave them the inherent ability to do so. Ezekiel 18:31 was most often cited as evidence: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit." From this Finney concluded, "Therefore [if] God requires men to make themselves a new heart on pain of eternal death, [then] it is the strongest possible evidence that they are able to do it." Many pushed for an experiential "heart religion" as opposed to a theoretical "head religion." The same goes for those more liberal on the notion of original sin. Taylor said, "God arouses the heart, and man responds by a clear decision to accept God's offer."[17]

It was the main "revival idea" that God's working through the heart produced a "holy temper of perfect love" and "Holy Emotion" in converts, whereby this "holiness made one a servant." This marvel was formally referred to by some as "perfectibility."[18]

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[16]Miller, 25.

[17]For whole paragraph, see McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, 67,68; Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 118, 124.

[18]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, 103.

The "chief fruit" of this was only seen when viewed in the aggregate.[19] In the words of McLoughlin,

> In philosophical terms it meant that if immediate conversion is available by an act of the human will, then, through God's miraculous grace all things were possible: human nature is open to total renovation in the twinkling of an eye and so, then, is the nature of society.[20]

This was *exactly* the viewpoint of William Jennings Bryan later. Bryan believed in the heart as both the channel and channeler of God's love and direction. This also led Bryan to believe, as indicated in an earlier section, that "a heart can be changed in a moment and, therefore, a [new] nation can be born in a day."[21] Bryan's "heart" was born in the spiritual fervor of an awakening that had spent itself before the man was even born. This principle of the heart led to Bryan pursuing post-Millennial objectives. It is no coincidence that this principle had the same effect on a great many, at the very least doctrinally, during and after the Second Great Awakening.

The Second Great Awakening created a new concept of "professional mass meetings," often organized in make-shift tent camps and also often interdenominational (but usually Protestant) in nature.[22] These mass meetings were the focus, the primary

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[19]Timothy L. Smith, 158.

[20]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 114.

[21]Bryan, Image, 154; Willard H. Smith, 30, 31.

[22]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 127. Finney led the way in the development of this style.

medium, of the transfer from the heart of the individual to change in the larger community. As one said at the time, "Just as the Gospel can rescue individuals . . . it can [also] renew the face of communities and nations."[23] Since heart-mediated "perfectibility" brings one back to the state of grace from before Adam's fall, then the proliferation of perfected hearts can lead to the Kingdom of God on Earth.

McLoughlin states that post-millennialism is the "social equivalent" of this individual perfection. And Finney and company were definitely post-millennialists. Finney said, "Read the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. The prophet there speaks of the advancement to be made as the creation of a new heaven and a new earth."[24] One scholar, Timothy L. Smith, claims that the Social Gospel of later years at least partially germinated from this soil and that Bryan's worldview certainly did.[25] The post-millennialism generated by the Awakening and subsequent revivals aroused an "identification of America's destiny with the Christian's hope."[26] McLoughlin goes

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[23]Perry Miller, 11, 12. Miller says that Second Great Awakening Evangelicalism saw as one of its primary missions the "transformation" of communities, not just individuals.

[24]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, 103, 106. This was specifically addressed to wayward pre-millennialists like the Millerites.

[25]Timothy L. Smith, 159-62. He says, "Scores of reformers, from John B. Gough . . . to William Jennings Bryan, operated on the same plan." Bryan's Applied Fundamentalism makes it difficult to place Bryan ideologically among the Social Gospelers, but in practice the point is well taken.

[26]Ibid., 229.

further,

> Many of these myths [of America's divine destiny] rose to central importance during the Second Great Awakening, when they served to unite the new nation in its expansionist and nationalist rise to power . . . this new consensus . . . included thebelief that Americans are a peculiar race, chosen by God to perfect the world. That was clearly the nation's manifest destiny, and it was unique.[26]

Bryan definitely saw America as a beacon of Christian virtue. His country had the potential to bring about world peace through example and influence. To him America was destined by God for this role, but for one problem. Via free will and usurpation by minority Darwinists, America could reject God's plan to its ruin and therefore the world's. This view of divine destiny stems from Bryan's religious beliefs in the same manner Second Great Awakening Evangelicalism helped generate the transfer of destiny under discussion. The two are surely related.

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[26]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 103, 105. Timothy L. Smith says that Old Light, Calvinist predestination of the individual was transferred to the nation in the form of Manifest Destiny by the theology of the New Lights. See Timothy L. Smith, 7.

CHAPTER NINE

TRANSCENDENTALISM

If Second Great Awakening Evangelicalism is the foundation for the politics of Applied Fundamentalism, Transcendentalism, where it coincides and overlaps with Evangelicalism, bound the political to its foundations. Transcendentalism grew out of the Unitarianism of New England, and like its contemporary the Awakening, with which it occasionally blurred, it emerged in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Prior to this point, Unitarianism had matured into an "institutionalized form" of rationalism, liberalism, social conformity, and suppression of emotional intensity, all in one.[1]

Its offspring, Transcendentalism, was "a religious demonstration [put] into the language of philosophy and literature rather than of theology." It took this course because prior to this in New England "theological disputation and fine logical distinguishing had long been a major industry." There was an inevitable reaction to this extremity, "Therefore this revival of religion had to find new forms of expression instead of new formulations of doctrine."[2]

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[1]Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), 7, 8.

[2]Ibid., 7-9. He further says Transcendentalism was spawned by a "drive in the souls of [its] participants" to satisfy "a hunger of the spirit for values which Unitarianism had concluded were no longer estimable." It should be understood as "an expression of religious radicalism against rational conservatism . . . an effort to create a living religion

Transcendentalism was influenced by European Romanticism generally and German Idealism in particular. The Enlightenment emphasis on mind had been replaced by the Romantic Age's emphasis on heart.[3] This is where it found common ground with the new Evangelicalism.

Transcendentalists are said to have had a special theory of "knowledge and cognition."[4] One fashioner of this theory was George Ripley. He declared man has a divine core or essence that must be contacted and studied. Man's heart is designed for God and the Christian Bible, says Ripley. Ripley was fond of "heart."[5]

Another Transcendentalist involved in shaping this theory was Orestes Brownson. Brownson and others referred to "reason" as often as any good Enlightenment philosopher, but for them it had a very different meaning and context. For Brownson and the other Transcendentalists, "reason" was more like divine intuition, and the reason of the old order was mere "understanding."[6] Reason (with a capital R) was intuition,

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without recourse to what it supposed the obsolete jargon of theology."

[3]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 140. McLoughlin says, "The age of Kant, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Emerson had replaced that of Locke, Voltaire, Pope, and Paine."

[4]Lilian Handlin, George Bancroft, The Intellectual as Democrat (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984), 154-55. Handlin mentions many authors of this theory, including George Ripley, Ralph W. Emerson, Orestes A. Brownson, Theodore Parker, Frederic Hedge, Nathaniel Frothingham, and Bronson Alcott, among others.

[5]Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists, 130-40, 284-99.

[6]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 139. Faye Rattner, Reform in America, Jacksonian Democracy, Progressivism, and the New Deal (Chicago: Scott,

inspiration, and innate ideas. It was more important than "Understanding" which was rationalism, intellectualism, academic logic, that which was the result of processing data from the sensory world. Brownson demonstrated how the intuitive reason of the Transcendentalists can be used to promote democracy.

> Reason, the light that shines out from God's throne, shines into every heart of every man and that truth lights her torch in the inner temple of every man's soul. . . . It is only on the reality of this inner light, and on the fact that it is universal in all men and in every man, that you can found a democracy.[7]

Ripley's and Brownson's connection with God via the intuitive heart was more or less the Transcendentalist idea of "immanent divinity." It can be persuasively argued that this immanent divinity has its Evangelical analogue in the newly discovered truth of the "Holy Spirit's nearness" to man.[8]

One Transcendentalist who had a direct impact on Bryan was George Bancroft. Bryan read Bancroft's History of the United States (1834) in college. Bancroft's book played a key role in further inculcating Bryan with Jacksonian principles.[9] Bancroft echoed Brownson in his definition of "Reason" as divine intuition and how it supports the superiority of democracy over other forms: "If Reason is a universal faculty, the universal

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Foresman and Company, 1964), 27.

[7]Rattner, 140.

[8]Timothy L. Smith, 98.

[9]Anderson, 25; Ashby, 22.

decision [of the masses] is the nearest criterion of truth."[10] Bancroft saw Christianity operating in history as an ally of the people because it utilizes the power of the people to further their own cause over time. He described Martin Luther as successful because the people supported him. George Fox succeeded only because the poor supported him. Religious freedom in early Maryland was not due to an enlightened elite but because of popular sentiment. "Puritanism was religion struggling for the people in spite of" Cotton Mather and his ilk. Bancroft said, "The people are less shaken than the prince . . . the uneducated population . . . formed conclusions just as those which a century later pervaded the country." Intuitive Reason is at work in the collective.[11]

Bancroft did not agree that economic inequality was ordained by God, per se, as many in religion argued in his time. He agreed that the Bible says the poor will always be but not that one should not continually try to rectify that. Bancroft said that "God did create distinctions, but as a stimulus to exertion and progress, encouraging accountability, frugality, and industry." Bancroft tried to walk a middle path. According to a biographer, "Bancroft aimed not to upset the existing order, only to dignify labor."[12] This surely resonated with Bryan.

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[10]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 139. Rattner, 27.

[11]Handlin, 150-52.

[12]Ibid., 152-53.

But beyond just dignifying labor, Bancroft wanted to dignify, to sanctify, democracy. In the words of his aforementioned biographer, his

> message proceeded from the seemingly incontrovertible proposition that 'a spirit in man' . . . connected the individual to God, enabling him intuitively to understand the eternal principles that guided the universe. . . . This faculty also made a democratic society feasible and legitimized the electoral process. . . . All major social changes through which mankind moved toward perfection were contingent upon popular support.[13]

That last sentence about Bancroft's doctrine is strongly reminiscent of at least a portion of Applied Fundamentalism's positive cycle of progress. Social progress depends upon the people themselves. Moreover, Bancroft once concluded "the spirit of God breathes through the combined intelligence of the people."[14] Now one can see in rough form the whole of the progressive cycle derived from Bryan's worldview, minus only the fundamentalist, Evangelical moorings. But Bancroft's conclusion does not merely resemble aspects of the subsequent Applied Fundamentalism, but also of the historical phenomenon known as Jacksonian Democracy, which Bancroft promoted as well as Transcendentalism.[15]

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[13]Ibid., 150.

[14]Rattner, 29. Compare this with Brownson's "wisdom of the people." They are essentially the same.

[15]Kazin, 12-13.

CHAPTER TEN

JACKSONIANISM

The search for the historical context of Applied Fundamentalism leads next to Jacksonianism. The historian John William Ward says, "where Jeffersonians rested their cause on the power of the mind, the Jacksonians rested theirs on the power of man's heart." But as with the Transcendentalists, "reason" was not altogether being rejected, just that of the rational mind of the Enlightenment, which was mere "understanding." The intuitive, innate "Higher Reason" of Romantic nature was fully embraced.[1] Ward argues that both the Jacksonians and the Transcendentalists "grappled with the same problem . . . (in different terms perhaps) . . . ," one politically and economically, the other theologically and philosophically.[2]

The Jacksonians echoed both Transcendentalists and New Light Evangelicals regarding the spirit of God residing in the collective. Jacksonians concluded that the "best government rests on the people and not on the few, on persons and not on property."[3] Jacksonians' view of the proper place of government and its checks on the

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[1]John William Ward, Andrew Jackson, Symbol for an Age (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 49-50.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Edwin C. Rozwenc, ed., The Meaning of Jacksonian Democracy (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1963), 16. Rozwenc chooses Bancroft's influence on

will of the masses were profoundly different from either the Whiggery of their day or the Jeffersonianism of their political forefathers. The Founders, under the wide banner of "Republicanism," placed structural safeguards into the workings of American democracy in order to restrain what they saw as the dangerous proclivities of absolute majorities. Jackson and his followers purposely tried to subvert these Republican constructs with "Democratic" ideals. Jackson believed in limited government, and thus limited restrictions on the will of the people. He was more concerned with inequitable decisions being made by a closed elite than anything the people would openly do.[4] In the words of Jackson scholar Robert V. Remini, "Jackson's philosophy of government was direct and simple: the people govern. Their will must be obeyed. Majority rule constitutes the only true meaning of liberty."[5] Though Bryan may not have understood the finer points of these differences between Jeffersonianism and Jacksonianism, his true allegiance was to the ideas of the latter, even if he more often invoked the first in name.[6]

Jacksonianism.

[4]Robert V. Remini, The Legacy of Andrew Jackson, Essays on Democracy, Indian Removal, and Slavery (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 7-14. Regarding Jackson and his adherents, this conviction was magnified, if not largely created, by events surrounding the election of 1824.

[5]Ibid., 25.

[6]Bryan imputed Jacksonian attributes to Jeffersonianism. In a letter to an admirer, Bryan answers the question of what constitutes Jeffersonianism: "Anything that brings the government nearer to the people and makes it more responsive to the will of the people is Jeffersonian." Bryan said a Jeffersonian is somone who sees the people as "the source of power and authority." William Jennings Bryan to Mrs. Mary E. Foy of Los

The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, a Jacksonian literary periodical, outlined these ideas as embracing three distinct concepts. One, the majority is more likely to interpret the greater good than the minority. Two, the minority is much more likely to abuse power. Three, no minority has any inherent superiority over the majority. This comes from a magazine seen today by many as the "codification" of Jacksonianism.[7] These positions led one historian to breathlessly claim that Jackson's party demonstrated a "desire to cater to the wishes and aspirations of the common man."[8]

The connection between religious feeling and Jacksonianism is compelling. Charles Finney himself compared the work of revivalists searching for converts to that of Jacksonians gathering votes. Jacksonianism and Evangelicalism meshed well when post-millennial feeling met voluntary reform societies.[9] Of course these reformist groups labored with and within Whig-Republican tradition as well, but the first two better augmented each other's goals. Evangelically-driven post-milliennialism delineated a special destiny for America to cultivate the Kingdom of God on Earth; it was also very Jacksonian to believe America was ordained to spread democracy to the world.[10]

Angeles, California, 5 June 1912, Bryan Papers.

[7]Rozwenc, 21.

[8]Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1959), 264.

[9]McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, 113, 126.

[10]Ward, 137.

This connection is just as strong regarding Transcendentalism and Jacksonianism. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., says of Walt Whitman, "Man, [Whitman] affirmed, could have a relation of moral significance to the state, so long as the state was truly the expression of popular will . . . ." Both Jacksonians and Transcendentalists, Schlesinger says, "detested special groups claiming authority to mediate between the common man and the truth."[11] Two men most responsible for overlap between these two elements were George Bancroft and Orestes Brownson. They belonged in both the Transcendentalist *and* Jacksonian movements. Both men saw the movements locked in battle against "the dead hand of John Locke." Bancroft especially tried to break free from the Enlightenment's emphasis on the rational individual *and* somehow tame Transcendentalism's penchant for expressive ultra-individualism. How he attempted to emancipate the masses from the first has been demonstrated. Regarding the second, Schlesinger writes,"Bancroft's great modification of transcendentalism was to add that the collective sense of the people provided the indispensable check on the anarchy of individual intuitions."[12]

Despite the compelling connection between Jacksonianism and the spiritual currents of Transcendentalism and the Second Great Awakening, some scholars do not believe the connection is absolute. They see other forces also at work. To begin with, not all Jacksonians were known for being God-fearing (or feeling). Though many

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[11]Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little Brown, 1945), 381, 389.

[12]Ibid., 380-81.

Jacksonians, like Bancroft and Brownson, saw Christianity generally as a legitimate vehicle for radicalism and reform, rather than as a "partner of privilege," some did not see things that way. Interestingly, a sizable fraction of Jacksonians were nearly as irreligious, or at least agnostic, as the people Bryan would later condemn.[13] It would seem that Jacksonian ideology did not rest exclusively on spiritual sentiment.

Whether stimulated by religious sentiment or morality, or by purely secular motivations, or some combination, one issue could be agreed on by all in the Jacksonians: The elimination of government privilege. Richard Hofstadter claims that resentment toward the Eastern "money power" in the South and West after the Panic of 1819, laid the groundwork for the movement against privilege and partially led to Jacksonianism itself. The resentment stimulated "The trend toward popular activity in politics. . ." that would follow.[14] Hofstadter says that as the franchise continued to expand to the masses, a new type of leader emerged. Around this new leadership model arose a philosophy reinforcing the virtue of extending suffrage.

Furthermore, Hofstadter argues, concurrent with this phenomenon was an expanding economic base creating increased opportunity for the common man.

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[13]Schlesinger, 353-59. Some of the more religious in the Whig camp took note of this and insinuated that it proved mass democracy was a "branch of atheism." Bancroft took great umbrage at this.

[14]Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, and the Men Who Made It (New York: Vintage Books, 1948), 51-52. This same amorphous money power bogeyman perceived as persecuting debtors in the South and West spawned the later Populist movement.

Government action was perceived as interference. The common people were the small "businessmen," who were, according to Jackson himself, "the planter, the farmer, the mechanic, and the laborer." The interference, the primary obstacle for these businessmen, came in the form of government privilege in favor of the financial elite.[15] The minority money interests, the parasitic financial elite, were using "paper currency" to thwart the interests of the virtuous producing majority. Therefore, what started out as resentment and an attempt to eliminate political privilege evolved into an egalitarian, laissez-faire philosophy of a "rising middle class" seeking to eliminate economic privilege; and what began as an extension of suffrage and a gentlemen's club of politicians emerged into a mass movement complete with a new, electorally savvy type of leadership.[16]

Schlesinger also goes beyond viewing religion as an exclusive source for Jacksonian fervor. The eminent scholar states the "Jacksonians believed that there was a deep-rooted conflict in society between the 'producing' and the 'non-producing' classes." This is a common assertion. What is interesting is his claim that the economic theories of Adam Smith played a vital role in Jacksonianism. The Wealth of Nations, he says, was anti-monopoly, anti-government privilege, and anti-mercantilist. Smith's productive versus unproductive labor "converged with" Jacksonian views of producers and consumers, and the idea of the the parasitic elite. Schlesinger believes Jacksonians

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[15]Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, 50-59, throughout paragraph.

[16]Ibid., 50-59, 62, 67.

supported Smith's labor theory of value, their interpretation of which could be invoked to protect the common people from exploitation.[17]

Some historians have yet other interpretations of the Jacksonians. Historian Lee Benson disagrees that there even was an "Age of Jackson." He says there was, rather, an "Age of Egalitarianism." From 1815 on, "egalitarianism challenged elitism." From this point of view the battles of the 1830s and 1840s "were less over ends than means."[18] Benson does not credit the supposed "Age of Jackson" with helping the common man in the long run. Benson cites and approves of the analyses of Bray Hammond, who says the "'Jacksonian revolution' democratized business under a great show of agrarian idealism . . . [which] made the Age of Jackson a festival of laissez faire prelusive to the Age of Grant and the robber barons."[19]

Another interesting, if less iconoclastic, idea put forth by Benson concerns the effect of the "Transportation Revolution." Benson states the "Age of Egalitarianism" was a product of this revolution. Other scholars better explain this idea saying, "A new religious emphasis upon an intuitive sense of the imminence of God and His placability matched the expansiveness of man's material potentialities . . . if God was ready for man,

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[17]For whole paragraph, see Schlesinger, 306-14

[18]Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy, New York as a Test Case (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), 336.

[19]Ibid., 333. This idea is interesting in that the later Populists adapted Jacksonian values, reflecting the changing usefulness of laissez faire in supporting the small businessman of the latter nineteenth century.

and vice versa" then this opportunity must be seized upon. Such a union can only be realized by sanctifying the Earth. So "from this basic premise sprang the reformist zeal and activity of the 1830s and 1840s."[20]

One last viewpoint worth mentioning is that of Populist scholar Michael Kazin. Though he offers no insight into how Jacksonianism started, he does offer useful insight into the mind of Jacksonian and Populist America. In America, any "out" group can claim that the existing power elite betrayed the original "spirit of '76," had usurped the egalitarian principles upon which the nation was founded. From this claim they would see themselves as fighting within the official paradigm to "reachieve" what had been stolen. Therefore, advocating revolution or radical constitutional change was both unnecessary and dangerous.[21] Though this did not apply to some in the groups mentioned above it did apply to most proponents of Jacksonian, and later, Populist, reform.[22] They were trying to get back what was rightfully theirs.

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[20]Frank Otto Gatell, John M. McFaul, eds., Jacksonian America, 1815-1840, New Society, Changing Politics (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), 1-2.

[21]Kazin, 12. Kazin says that if this idea holds true, then America is "at once the most idealistic and the most conservative nation on the Earth." Again, see Gordon Wood's The Radicalism of the American Revolution.

[22]This would go far in explaining why most Populists, like Bryan, would not advocate outright socialism. For other reasons, see Ashby, 30.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE TERTIARY STRATUM: POPULISM AND McGUFFEY

The Populists had a Jacksonian heritage.[1] Yet, there was at least one major alteration, and this greatly affected Byran. The Jacksonian heritage included the following precepts: the supreme wisdom is with the people; majority rule is morally correct; the producer versus consumer paradigm; advocation of the common "businessman"; special privileges toward none; and small government is best. William Jennings Bryan and the Populists maintained all of these notions but one. They advocated a role for an activist government. Such a government would still be more or less committed to laissez-faire when it came to business, but a complete, hands-off policy would no longer do in the age of large, concentrated, corporate wealth where it concerned the well-being of Jackson's "common man."[2]

The Populists espoused strong Jacksonianism. Populism started in the South and West, and so did at least the anti-banking aspect of Jacksonianism. Populism sprouted as

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[1]Kazin, 10, 30.

[2]Lawrence Goodwyn, The Populist Moment, A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 317-319. Goodwyn has a negative view of Bryan's effect on the Populist movement.

a result of resentments against the perceived callousness of "money interests."[3]

As with Jackson, the Populists' "central metaphor was salvation from an elite whose power appeared both monstrous and seamless." The Populists' "sentimental visions and cataclysmic warnings rode on the long wave of romanticism that had first swelled in the 1830s under . . . Jacksonian democrats."[4] In the words of Ignatius Donnelly, the Catholic Populist, "The interests of rural and urban labor are the same; their enemies are identical." Tom Watson summed things up, "The People's Party is the protest of the plundered against the plunderers — of the victim against the robber."[5] The one aspect of Jacksonian-style faith that most resonated with the Populists was that America's "democratic heritage" could be "saved." The people could regain control of government and restore true principles via the electoral system.[6]

This change of mind regarding government's role occurred in Populism because "the politics of the industrial age received the focus of attention. The rules of commerce had changed, and reformers knew it: indeed, the thought was at the very center of the Populist premise."[7] Laissez-faire was now hurting the common people instead of

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[3]Ibid., 3-55, 69, 142, 168; Kazin, 30; Hofstadter, 187-88.

[4]Kazin, 28, 38.

[5]Ibid., 27, 29.

[6]Goodwyn, 173. Compare this with Kazin's thoughts on the "idealistic conservatism" of the American democratic heritage. Goodwyn's remarks on the Populists unifying faith fall right into Kazin's observed paradigm.

[7]Ibid., 211.

alleviating the problem. In the Age of Jackson corporate, commercial wealth was usually amassed in league with government nurturing, crowding out smaller businesses and exploiting the masses. By the Gilded Age concentrations of wealth were forming easily without active government help. Laissez-faire policy had changed from benefiting the masses to being detrimental to them. This was Hofstadter's point earlier. Worse still, many saw government favoritism in practice just by virtue of its support of a strict monetary supply. Not only would a proactive government be needed to support the common man, it would also have to protect him from injustice.

One of the ways Bryan became familiar with Jacksonian principles (and collaterally Transcendentalism) was by reading George Bancroft's History of the United States in college. This "surely helped to confirm his political allegiances."[8] But young Bryan's primary acquisition of Jacksonianism came through his father. Bryan's father hated the corruption of the Grant regime. He hated corruption in politics.[9]

His father became heavily involved in the Greenback party. As a result of his vicarious experiences with the seritonal-Jacksonian, proto-Populism of his father, Bryan, when he was in college (while being further influenced by Bancroft), worried much

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[8]Ashby, 22; Anderson, 25. Anderson says it is one book that "reinforced his democratic faith."

[9]Hibben, 42-43.When Silas Bryan ran for office (to Congress) in 1872 he refused to campaign for money or put up his own, and lost an almost certain election. The district in question was very Democratic, but Northern, and his opponent was openly pro-South during the Civil War. Silas's career plans to go from state judge to U. S. Congressman ended right there. His son William never forgot this.

about the "money power" endangering the Republic. Bryan made a special effort to study the writings of Wendell Phillips on the subject. After college and through his early political career, Bryan continued to research and ponder the issues involved.[10]

Yet Bryan was quoted in 1892, while running for office, as saying that he did not "know anything about free silver," and since "the people of Nebraska are for free silver . . . I am for free silver. I will look up the arguments later."[11] At least one author thinks Bryan was being "disingenuous." It is likely Bryan was being coy for political effect.[12]

Bryan saw the silver issue as a moral, religious problem underlying the political.[13] His Evangelical and Jacksonian heritage are evident in his myriad comments on the silver issue. Bryan stated during this controversy that "the man who is employed for wages is as much a business man as his employer."[14] This was almost verbatim from Jackson himself. During his famous "Cross of Gold" speech, Bryan said it is the common businessman, the one who truly creates wealth, who is most worthy of political

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[10]Ashby, 34.

[11]Goodwyn, 217. Also see, Koenig, 72-73.

[12]Ashby, 35.

[13]Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, 191. Regarding Bryan's writings on the Silver issue and the campaign of 1896, Hofstadter writes in seeming exasperation, "It is the first time in the history of the Republic when a candidate ran for the presidency on the strength of monomania."

[14]William Jennings Bryan, The First Battle, 200. The First Battle is an excellent source for Bryan material on the free silver issue. It is the primary source used here because it contains all of the relevant speeches and Bryan's personal commentaries on the matter.

"consideration." To those who opposes this notion, "We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we petition no more. We defy them[!]"[15]

Regarding economic privilege Bryan cried, "We are not surprised to find arrayed against us those who are the beneficiaries of government favoritism." Furthermore, on the Jacksonian premise that minorities are inherently inferior in determining the common good, Bryan admonishes President Cleveland, "The President has been deceived. He can no more judge the wishes of the great mass of our people by the expressions of these men [bankers, goldbugs] than he can measure the ocean's depths by the foam upon its waves."[16]

The Commoner made clear his tradition: "The Democratic Party was founded by Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Jefferson dared to defy the wealth and power of his day and plead the cause of the common people." After citing Jefferson, Bryan continued his invocation of the Populist pantheon stating, "What we need is an Andrew Jackson to stand as Jackson stood against the encroachments of organized wealth."[17] Bryan outlined two ideas of government and its relation to the economy. The choice was between the "trickle-down" philosophy of the minority elite and the Jacksonian egalitarianism of the people.

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[15]Ibid., 117-20.

[16]Ibid., 110, 316.

[17]Ibid., 123, 203.

> There are those who believe that, if you will only legislate to make the well-to-do prosperous, their prosperity will *leak through* [emphasis added] on those below. The Democratic idea, however, has been that if you legislate to make the masses prosperous, their prosperity will find its way up through every class which rests upon them .[18]

Finally, Bryan's silver-era comments exhibit, even on this most domestic of issues, the sense of destiny and mission born several decades earlier. Bryan often spoke of the "producing masses of this nation and the world," and worried how the wrong decision regarding the silver issue might affect the world both economically and in terms of moral example. The decision was global because America's destiny was so.[19]

Bryan, like Populism itself, modified Jacksonianism by dropping the insistence on small, laissez-faire government. He supported a variety of reforms, both during the 1890s and beyond: An eight-hour work day, income tax, women's suffrage, prohibition, and more.

During his acceptance speech to the party in 1896, Bryan said

> We are content to have the co-operation of those who desire to have the government administered without fear or favor . . . . Those who stand upon the Chicago platform believe that the government should not only avoid wrongdoing, but that it should also *prevent* wrongdoing [emphasis added]. . . .[20]

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[18]Ibid., 205. This also from the Cross of Gold speech.

[19]Ibid., 100, 206.

[20]Ibid., 319. A dozen years later Bryan went at least as far when he said "it is the duty of the government to provide that no one shall suffer without his fault." See William Jennings Bryan, remark made after a speech given at Cooper Union, question and answer period, 21 April 1908, Bryan Papers.

Here marks a major departure from the old Jacksonianism of his father. Early Populist though he was, ". . . public improvement did not fit in with [Judge Bryan's] tenets of individualism."[21] But William Jennings Bryan and the Populists believed they had no choice. The government should not only cease supporting injustice, but should go out of its way to combat it. This adjustment, however, may not be the only one Bryan accepted and assimilated. The McGuffey readers that Bryan credited so heavily for his upbringing may have contributed to one last act of fine-tuning on the road to Applied Fundamentalism.

The McGuffey readers emerged out of the tumultuous 1830s, and the events of that time shaped much of their style and message. William Holmes McGuffey, the author of the readers, was a Presbyterian preacher and teacher.[22] Though McGuffey attempted to remain neutral on the specific religious controversies dividing Old Lights and New Lights at the time, he was not neutral in other areas. He was firmly Christian and tried to impart Christian morality to his school-age audience. McGuffey's works made it clear to youngsters that "no book is more important than the Bible" and went to great lengths to demonstrate and explain its stern moral teachings.[23] McGuffey ingrained

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[21]Coletta I, 6, 7.

[22]John H. Westerhoff III, McGuffey and His Readers: Piety, Morality, and Education in Nineteenth-Century America (Nashville, Tenn.: Parthenon Press, 1978), 41.

[23]Ibid., 77. McGuffey's take on original sin and other specific doctrinal matters are not directly addressed. See also, 87-88.

in his readers that they should be especially aware of avarice and that they should love the poor.[24]

McGuffey's worldview was also Newtonian, teaching that Newton conquered myth and superstition. True science is based on "truth" and observation and mathematics, "not those visionary and arrogant assumptions," proposed by mere philosophers who did not adhere to Newton's standards.[25] Note the similarities to Bryan's views of scientific standards. McGuffey probably inspired them.[26]

McGuffey was certainly influenced by the Romanticism of his time, especially in regard to his view of nature. But McGuffey's flirtation with Transcendentalist concepts did not lead him to Jacksonianism. Unlike his neutrality on the rifts indigenous to the Second Great Awakening, McGuffey definitely took sides on the political matters of the Jacksonian era. In fact, McGuffey was a staunch Whig of strong Hamiltonian convictions, and it showed in his books. He was anti-Jackson; in one work he attacks the

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[24]Ibid., 89-96. His basic theology was that God is infinite and perfect. This perfection is present in His creation; only free will creates imperfection and thus evil. Harmony with divine perfection therefore requires submission to God's will. As a result, "All life leads directly to the moral end for which it was designed," a conclusion Bryan certainly would have approved of. See also 48-49.

[25]Richard D. Mosier, Making the American Mind, Social and Moral Ideas in the McGuffey Readers (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965), 6.

[26]Bryan almost certainly read McGuffey's writings on the matter. The quote above comes from the "Fourth Reader," a book for intermediate to advanced students, which was in circulation as such until Bryan was at least college age. See footnote, Ibid., 179.

values of the French Revolution and insinuates that Jackson was a Jacobin demagogue.[27] The McGuffey readers also openly questioned the recent extension of the franchise. He was especially concerned if the religious and moral underpinnings of society were strong enough at the base to support popular rule. If the answer were no, then nothing would stop the common people from misusing their freedom and power for anarchic pursuits. People would become "animals."[28] Bryan almost certainly read these passages regarding McGuffey's fears and this quite likely had an impact on the young Bryan.[29] It would be ironic if someone espousing Hamiltonian doctrine were to actually have affected William Jennings Bryan the Populist, the Jacksonian, the Jeffersonian. Yet it seems likely McGuffey did, but in an interesting way. Bryan's greatest fear was the loss of the Bible as the moral cornerstone of society. With it, democracy not only worked but was the only true expression of God's will. Without it, humanity would indeed go feral. Therefore, the "great" influence of the McGuffey readers on Bryan, and their Hamiltonianism, probably played a role in shoring up the overall coherence of Applied Fundamentalism.

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[27]Ibid., 2-7, 17, 21.

[28]Ibid., 17. This perhaps clears up McGuffey's position on the inherent sinfulness of man even if it was left unsaid.

[29]The McGuffey readers experienced a major revision in 1879, several years after the author's death. They were secularized and perhaps neutralized politically as well, but this was long after Bryan's childhood. See Westerhoff, 179

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE FINAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT, KIDD'S LEVERAGE, INADEQUATE HISTORIOGRAPHY ADDRESSED, NEW QUESTIONS ASKED

In addition to the cyclical nature of Applied Fundamentalism, the hierarchial nature of its context is evident. In pyramidal fashion, at its most "fundamental," Bryan's system is based on the values of the conservative wing of the Evangelicalism sired during the Second Great Awakening.[1] Secondary to this is the Jacksonianism originating in the same period.[2] The primary Evangelicalism creates a need for mission that the secondary Jacksonian level fulfills nicely. Transcendentalism is shared between them and can perhaps be seen as the Romantic glue binding them together. Yet even more uniformly shared, it seems, was a Newtonian worldview, a blend of physics and theism, that saw real science as only what is tangible or least mathematically provable. "Mechanical arts" were more important than "speculative sciences."[3] From these primary and secondary elements, the larger mass of Bryan's worldview is assembled. But there is more.

A tertiary level attunes this mass for greater adaptation and coherence. First there

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[1]Conservative in regard to original sin.

[2]Some major portions of Jacksonianism were not religious in nature but purely political, and because Applied Fundamentalism is primarily religious it is easy to see that Jacksonianism overlays Evangelicalism in this case.

[3]Perry Miller, 274-75.

is Populism. Populism, resting on the more primal body of values below, changes certain aspects of Jacksonianism so as the missionary zeal of both baser levels can more practically perform.[4] Then there is the influence of McGuffey's Hamiltonian Whiggery. Seemingly in contradiction to Jacksonianism, it buttresses the Evangelical connection upon which the Jacksonianism rests. This synthesizes two opposing currents of American history into one. At least in a small way, this adds solidity to the pyramid.[5]

Last are the works of Benjamin Kidd. Though not part of the great flow of American history (except insomuch as they affected a great protagonist in that flow, William Jennings Bryan), Kidd's books clearly belong in this tertiary, fine-tuning stratum of Applied Fundamentalism. Social Evolution, Kidd's first opus, enabled Bryan to relate to the ideas of an admitted social Darwinist. Strangely, their values seemed largely to correlate in spite of their different backgrounds, occupations, and methods of reasoning. Science of Power, Kidd's second book, furthered this connection but also clarified Darwin's purported role, both directly and especially via Nietzsche, in endangering Applied Fundamentalism's most cherished ideals and goals. This assimilation of Kidd is

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[4]Within the framework of Applied Fundamentalism, both of the levels upon which Populism rests, Evangelicalism and Jacksonianism, have strong crusading drives. Jacksonianism was already channeling that of Evangelicalism in line with its own. Populism made adjustments in Jacksonian philosophy (eg., sanctioning activist government) that allowed this crusader spirit to be better adapted to new, post-Jacksonian industrial realities.

[5]The organizational structure of Applied Fundamentalism's historical context could also be described in terms of concentric circles.

the last addition, last adaptation to Bryan's value system, and thus the most seemingly ancillary of all elements in Applied Fundmentalism.

The implied order of importance of these elements, however, can be misleading. For example, though Populism may be "predicated" on Jacksonianism in Applied Fundamentalism, this does not make the Populist contribution any less important. There are two ways of viewing the value of these respective historical endowments. Evangelicalism is the base for all here, but this only gives it a high instrumental value, whereas when compared with Populism or the McGuffey connection, it has lower inherent value. As an illustration, humans share the vast majority of their genetic code with chimpanzees, implying that most human genetic material would produce an animal at an ape level of complexity. That larger amount of material is instrumental in getting humans much further along the evolutionary path than the small amount that accounts for the difference between humans and chimpanzees. But that small amount makes all the difference in the world. It makes humans human. It has high inherent value. Perhaps it is ironic that an evolutionary analogy is used to help explain the historical context of William Jennings Bryan, but no more than using his reaction to Darwinism to outline the form of his thinking. Many other analogies are possible.[6]

The point should be clear: As "tertiary" as Populism and Hamiltonianism are in the historical context reviewed here, they hold tremendous leverage, and this should be

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[6]Another interesting analogy is to the economic concept of "added value."

kept in mind when analyzing the whole of Bryan's thought. The item arguably with the greatest leverage, at least in regards to Bryan's last crusade and late-in-life beliefs, is Kidd's contribution. Kidd helped focus the already well-developed body of Applied Fundamentalism against one over-arching foe, taking all of Bryan's previous crusades, under all the various banners, and subsuming them.[7]

Bryan had no one definite name for this body of beliefs before or after its anti-Darwinian focus. One can see why Bryan used so many labels interchangeably. Progressivism, Populism, even Jeffersonianism and Jacksonianism, were not specific banners in which Bryan was interested; any of his crusades could have gone under any and all of the aforementioned banners.[8] The only name he ever attempted to give to his personal beliefs was "Applied Christianity," and that was already taken. But still that did not matter to him; all that mattered was his faith, and that faith was Applied Fundamentalism.

Most Bryan scholars have presented an inadequate picture of Bryan when it comes to the form and context of Applied Fundamentalism. First there is the open hostility and misunderstandings of the tone-setters and disparagers, the first two groups

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[7]One could view the main body of Bryan's beliefs as a ship with tertiary elements as a rudder, giving direction to the whole.

[8]Not only did Bryan blur technical distinctions between Jeffersonianism and Jacksonianism, he did so between Populism and Progressivism as well. Bryan referred to the "three progressive national campaigns -- 1896, 1900, and 1908 . . . ." William Jennings Bryan to Champ Clark in Washington, D. C. , 5 September 1911, Bryan Papers.

of Bryan scholars. Some of this carries on in the writings of the later period, especially in regards to Ashby, who was vaguely hostile to Bryan, and did not learn from Levine about the fallacy of the Bryan-as-dichotomy thesis. Even an eminent scholar such as Hofstadter (though not specifically a Bryan biographer) attacks Bryan for engaging in "primitive politics," while not attacking the Evangelical and Jacksonian heritage of such politics. Hofstadter, like others, was tainted by his use of early writers on Bryan and did not understand the historical perspective.[9] Ginger and others did not see, or did not care to see, that Bryan was utilizing an older standard for science. If they had, they might have softened their tone, even if they still disagreed with his basic premises.

Other authors do much justice to Bryan and Applied Fundamentalism, elucidating certain elements of the historical context involved but going no further. Clements, in his study of Bryan as "Missionary Isolationist," states that "the roots of [Bryan's] idealism were in evangelical Protestantism and in a Jeffersonian-Jacksonian belief in democracy as the ideal form of government." Clements expounds on Bryan's view of America's central role as an exemplar nation, "his tendency to equate *vox populi* with *vox dei*," and the importance of "heart" in Bryan's value system.[10] Clements briefly mentions many crucial aspects of Applied Fundamentalism, but fails to organize them into a larger, interdependent, structured system. But this was not Clements's goal. He

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[9]Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, 191.

[10]Clements, xi-xiv, 5-12, 129, 141, 156.

primarily intended to cover Bryan's role in the issues immediately surrounding World War One, and he did so very well.

Cherny ponders how Bryan utilized Republican means to achieve Jacksonian values, but does not detail how.[11] He only says, "Bryan's religious faith converged with his Jeffersonian political principles to buttress his belief in the people and his commitment to controlling the new economic behemoths of industrial America."[12] What Cherny says is correct but vague. This is what makes Cherny so frustrating. He completely misses the operations of Applied Fundmentalism. Schlesinger deals with Bryan's political roots in the Age of Jackson, but completely misses the religious flavor and underpinnings associated with Bryan's Jacksonianism.

Most frustrating of all is Anderson, whose overall analysis of the historical context is the best of anyone's (though still too short and not fully examined). He and Ray Ginger state that Bryan eschewed original sin. They could not be more wrong. It is a glaring mistake, but understandable given that post-millennial fervor and Evangelical overlap with Transcendentalist Idealism can give the appearance of such. In other words, what appears on the surface as a rosy view of human nature is far from the case after closer scrutiny. The greatest inadequacy of all is the lack of a relatively concise, yet well explored, presentation of Applied Fundamentalism and its inherent structure.

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[11]Cherny, 17.

[12]Ibid., 188.

This is especially the case when one considers how the implications of Applied Fundamentalism can be explored further and used to generate important questions. Benjamin Kidd had a major impact on Bryan's interpretation of Darwin, Nietzsche, and World War One, but what would have happened if Bryan had never read The Science of Power? Is the mistake by Anderson and Ginger regarding original sin a common one and could it indicate a need for deeper exploration of the relationship between Transcendentalism and the Second Great Awakening? Did the Transcendental belief in inherent human goodness overflow and affect the Awakening in the way or to the degree currently assumed? As a result, could historians also be wrong about the position of others on the issue of original sin as well as other topics?

Was it Darwinism that effectively ended post-millennialism in conservative Protestantism, outside the specific Bryan context? If the majority had clearly supported Darwinism, as they do today, would Bryan have abided by "the wisdom of the people," or assume a minority was imposing its will upon them?

Most importantly, Levine, after exposing the Bryan radical-cum-reactionary thesis as false, attempts to replace it with another paradox in Bryan's worldview. In Levine's words, "The paradox of Bryan's final years was in a sense the paradox of American history itself: a faith in the inevitability of progress coupled with a desire to see America remain unchanged."[13] From the point of view of Applied Fundamentalism there was no

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[13]Levine, 199

paradox: Traditional values are the only guarantors of progress, or at least just and moral progress. But this position proved to be inadequate to the task at hand. Could Bryan have formulated, consciously or unconciously, a different solution to the dynamic tension outlined by Levine, a solution still largely in keeping with his basic values?

It is fascinating to think of what would have happened if Bryan's worldview had absorbed and integrated another "tertiary," high-leverage element updating his scientific modes of understanding like Populism did for his political understanding. Given his theoretical openings to evolution *without* such an adaptation, would Bryan have found some way to accommodate the Bible with Darwin to some degree? Would the "thousand years for a day" have been the bridge he needed? Levine points to hints of "FDR" in Bryan, trying to absorb radicalism and maintain the middle via reform.[14] Would Applied Fundamentalism, modified in its scientific understanding, have served, at least partially, as a basis for a different, less secularly oriented "vital center" later on? Would this have been preferable as a source of reformist energy, or a disaster caused by old traditions living long past their prime?

Applied Fundamentalism provides a new historiographical tool with which to explore American history. It can lend historian and layman alike insight into what was, and what could have been. It could therefore be another positive aspect of Bryan's legacy. To fashion this tool, one needs only to examine Bryan's reaction to Darwin to

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[14]Ibid.

understand Bryan's complex and historically insightful value system. That is perhaps the greatest irony of all, at least from the perspective of Applied Fundamentalism: That Darwinism could be used, most surprisingly via Bryan himself, for any positive purpose at all.

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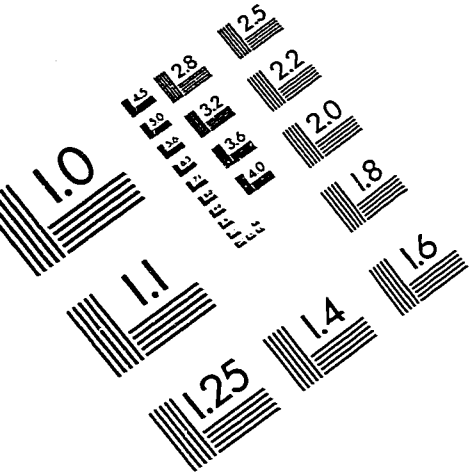
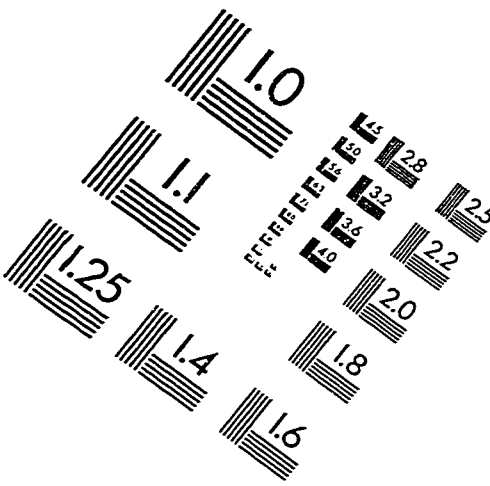
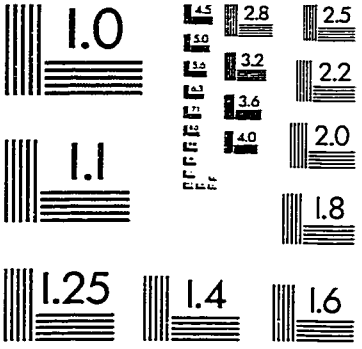
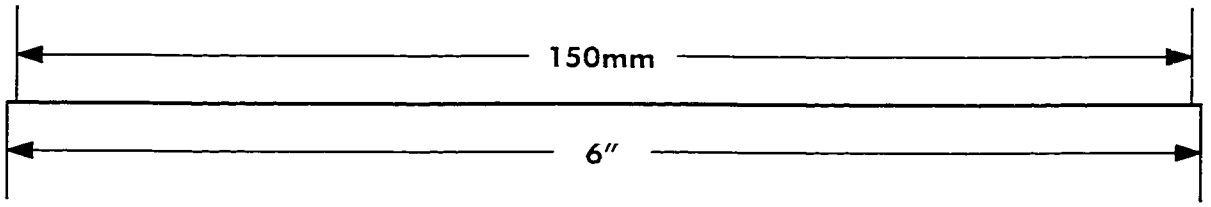
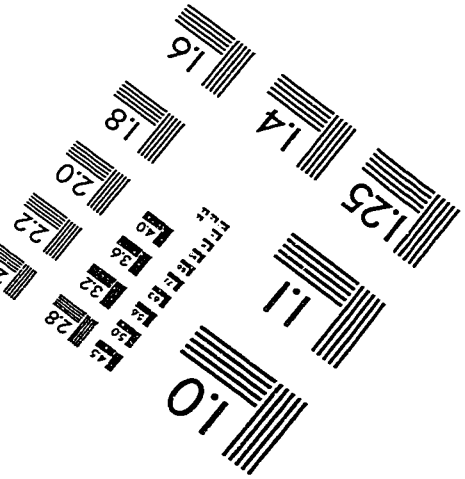
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

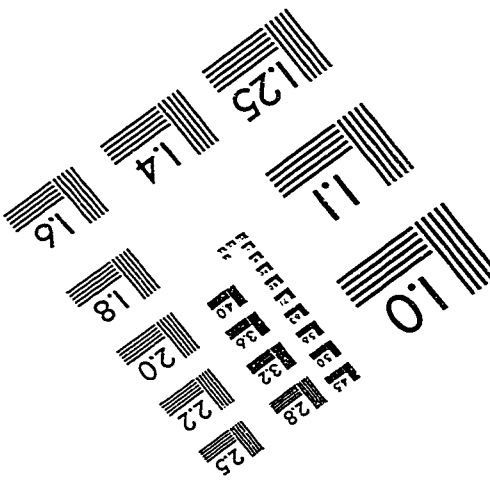












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